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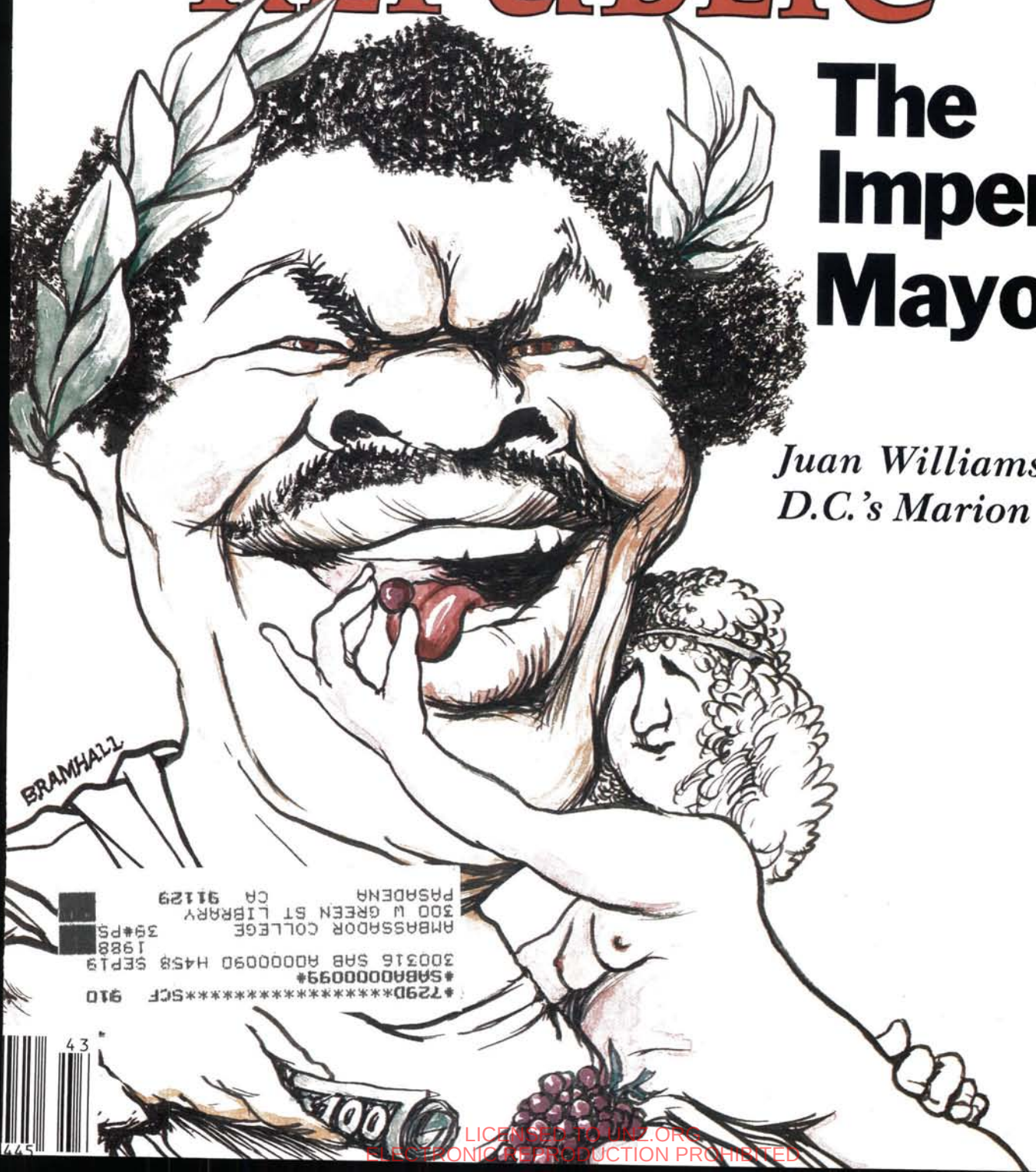
THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCT 21 1987



The Imperial Mayor

Juan Williams on D.C.'s Marion Barry

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — OCTOBER 26, 1987

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 197, Number 17, Issue 3,797, October 26, 1987. (Printed in the U.S. on October 7, 1987.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 5 & 12, July 13 & 20, Aug. 10 & 17, and Sept. 14 & 21, 1987) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $56; foreign, $81; Canada, $70. Back issues, $2.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322.** For subscription problems call **800-525-0643.**

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CORRESPONDENCE

NICARAGUAN BLIND SPOT

To the editors:

Alan Tonelson's proposed alternative to our present Central American policy ("Give 'Em Hell," October 5), while not possessed of the same naïveté regarding the Sandinistas as other opponents to *contra* aid, nevertheless shares a similar blind spot. That is, it asks the Nicaraguan people (and possibly, in the long run, other Central Americans) to settle for a way of life, and a form of government, that Mr. Tonelson and virtually every other American would find unacceptable. If democracy is good for North Americans, why should Central Americans have to settle for less? Mr. Tonelson's particular myopia seems to center around an assurance that our "security" needs are met. His fellow *contra* aid opponents' myopia is the search for "peace," or a "negotiated settlement," in the region. While the policies of the administration are by no means ideal, they at least possess the virtue of assuming that what is sauce for the North American goose is sauce for the Central American gander. Sadly, I cannot say the same for Mr. Tonelson who would relegate an entire region "to the obscurity it so richly deserves."

ROBERTO RIVERA
Falls Church, Virginia

BORK'S CASE

To the editors:

Renata Adler ("Coup at the Court," September 14 & 21) contends that Robert Bork has never "written anything even arguably in support of a First Amendment right" except for a libel ruling in favor of two conservative columnists and an attack on the fairness doctrine. In fact, Bork wrote for a unanimous panel in December 1984, requiring the Washington, D.C., transit authority to allow an ad that mocked President Reagan's alleged insensitivity to minorities and workers to be displayed in the subways. He ruled that the montage was not deceptive and that the transit authority could not ban it even if it were. This ruling demonstrates that he supports freedom for the thought he hates, the litmus test for anyone's stand on the First Amendment.

ALAN D. VIARD
Somerville, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Renata Adler focuses her criticism on the "consequences" rather than the principles of the law that it is a judge's duty to uphold. Legislative action and constitutional conventions are the appropriate forums for making policy that serves changing needs. I share Adler's concern that a results-oriented Supreme Court might become a tool for political ideology. But in citing only those perceived consequences of Bork's views that conflict with her political agenda, Adler sounds more like Jerry Falwell than a child of the Enlightenment.

GEORGE THRUSH
Cambridge, Massachusetts

SALMON AND DONNA RICE

To the editors:

Regarding your New York Diarist ("Not Tonight, Dear," September 28) and Gail Sheehy's "women's-mag perspective": Your men's-mag perspective on male sexuality suggests that men want "to have sex with women like Donna Rice" (what is she "like," anyway? *I've* never met her) for reasons similar to the reasons salmon swim upstream. If I had only known that the male drive was so uncontrollable and mysterious, I'd have been more careful on my walks down the stream of city streets. My only question is: Why bother to want to have sex with "women like Donna Rice"? I'm sure the salmon aren't so choosy.

MELISSA FROILAND
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

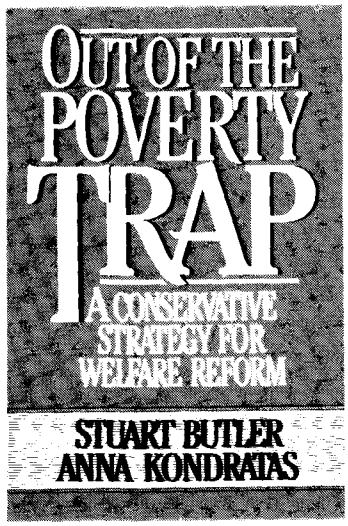
UNBRIDLED ANGLOPHILIA

To the editors:

The Notebook item (October 5) on Joe Biden's infamous Kinnock speech stated: "The differences between the two speeches are as interesting as the similarities, illustrating—compare 'thick' with 'not bright'—the lower standard of what passes for eloquence in American politics." In Britain, "thick" is a standard term, equivalent to our "dense." It is *not* an "eloquent" term—to the contrary, it's trite and plebeian. Last year I experi-

continued on page 42

Finally, a conservative's answer to welfare that doesn't simply abolish it.



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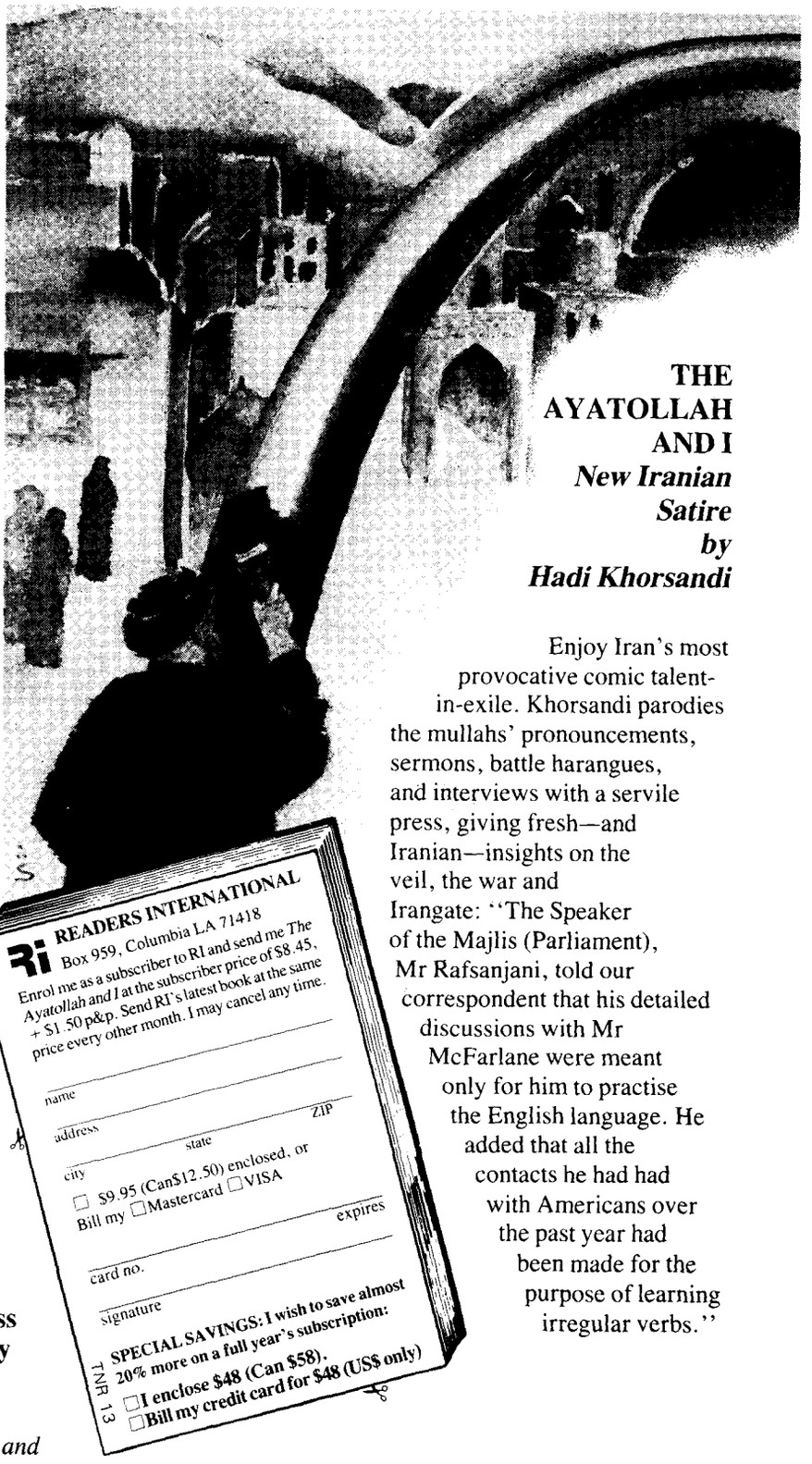

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE CHARACTER ISSUE

"Do not run a campaign that would embarrass your mother."—Senator Robert Byrd's advice to Democratic candidates

Des Moines, Iowa, November 15—A tearful Senator Paul Simon announced his withdrawal from the 1988 presidential race this evening, following revelations that several of his aides had failed to wash their hands before a lemonade social and foreign-policy debate sponsored by a local elementary school PTA here last week.

This gaffe alone might not have been fatal, experts say. But the Iowa political community was alive with rumors that the *New York Times* also had information it was about to publish that the aides had not brushed their teeth afterward or written thank-you notes the next day. This, say the experts, left Simon with no choice but to withdraw.

For the past three days, Simon has huddled with advisers in search of some way to overcome the negative publicity resulting from this crisis in his campaign. But as Simon's staff's table manners came to dominate the headlines, many Iowa Democrats became furious at Simon for diverting attention from President Reagan's recent announcement that intermediate-range nuclear missiles to be removed from Europe will be redeployed in Harlingen, Texas, and aimed at Nicaragua. What some experts see as a potentially valuable issue for the Democrats in next year's general election has now been completely overshadowed by the controversy over party etiquette.

Simon's departure leaves a gap in the Democratic field for 1988. In fact, there's no one left. Senator Albert Gore Jr., Simon's only remaining rival, withdrew last week following revelations that his staff had leaked word that Representative Richard Gephardt had cried upon learning that aides to the Rev. Jesse Jackson were responsible for informing the media that Governor Bruce Babbitt's campaign had pointed the finger at Governor Michael Dukakis's aides for revealing that Senator Joe Biden had borrowed a speech from British Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock. Kinnock is expected to take advantage of the sudden lack of Democratic contenders by announcing his candidacy tomorrow.

Political observers are divided over whether Simon's mistake was in not being aware of this social misbehavior on the part of his aides, in originally attempting to brush the issue aside after it came to light, in hesitating for 15 minutes before firing the aides, or in finally letting them go.

"In fact," explains William Schneider of the American Enterprise Institute, "it was all four. The voters will not excuse Simon from blame for his aides' performance simply because he didn't know about it. If a candidate cannot manage his own campaign, how can he manage the world's most demanding job? His original inclination to minimize this serious incident, of course, raises questions about his character. The 15-minute delay while he vacillated about how to respond to this scandal naturally leads to concerns about his decisiveness. Meanwhile, his final decision to let them go reveals an excessive streak of piety and an unseemly willingness to pander to outside pressure. What, after all, did they do that was so terrible?"

Schneider noted that the Reagan presidency has had a profound effect on the image a successful candidate must convey. "After eight years of Ronald Reagan's simpleminded bromides, the voters have come to expect leadership with a similar clarity of vision." "However," he added, "after eight years of Ronald Reagan's hands-off management style, the voters have come to demand something completely different."

Some bitter Simon supporters are asking why the press should be focusing so much damaging attention on this episode, while Senator Robert Dole's recent strangling to death of his wife on national television has attracted relatively little notice. "The explanation is simple," said media analyst Norman J. Ornstein. "Dole was already established in the public mind as a vicious character. His murder of his wife tells us nothing new

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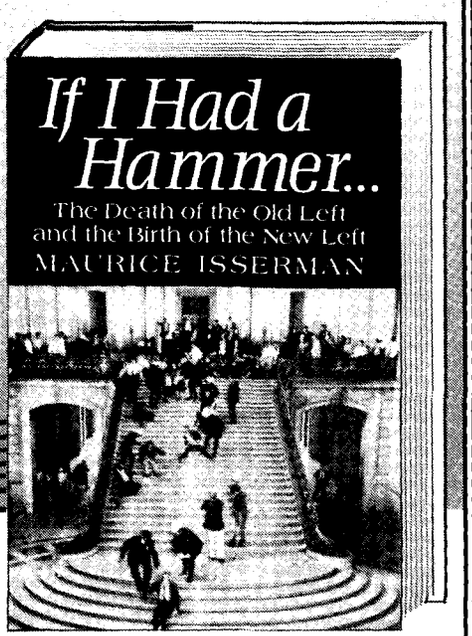

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 26, 1987

SHUT UP AND DEAL

The Palestinians are fortunate to have had the Jews as their enemies. Otherwise, who would have noticed, let alone cared a fig, that yet another Arab ethnic group—this one only in the nascent stages of self-definition and peoplehood—had not been vouchsafed self-determination? And what, after all, is self-determination in the Arab world, where (though not just there) what passes for a nation-state is hardly more than a system of violent domination by one clan or sect, ideological force or local particularism over others? No longer do we assume that "national liberation" is either inevitable or a sign of progress. Certainly, no one has plausibly argued that sovereign Palestinians would achieve what has eluded all of their already sovereign Arab cousins: constitutionalism, civil liberties, free elections, legal equality, a sustained modernization. Yet without these, revolutionary change is nothing but a tragic *opéra bouffe* foisted on the hapless common people.

Nevertheless, there lingers in the world's moral resorts—where there is nothing but indifference to the Kurds, Tamils, Berbers, Tibetans, Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians, and dozens of other disfranchised and displaced peoples—an exquisite sensitivity to the statelessness of the Palestinians. The Palestinian leadership class brought disaster on its people years ago, first by rejecting the mildest notions of Jewish legitimacy in the Holy Land, and then by rejecting an actual Palestinian state envisioned in the 1947 Partition Plan. Since then, following subsequent disasters, the Palestinians have failed to seize a series of opportunities, such as the autonomy provisions of the Camp David agreements.

For a long time this record seemed to make no impression on the Palestinians' international friends, whose sympathetic disposition was validated by the often hard-hearted behavior of the Israelis in the post-1967 occupied territories. Much of this good will toward the Palestinians may also be attributed to sturdy ill will in the West toward the victim Jews, who at last had cast themselves as victimizers.

By now, however, 20 years after the Six-Day War, the idiosyncratic place of the Palestinians in world opinion has just about been forfeited. This is not because they have no real grievance. They have one. But even their most indulgent supporters have lost patience with a movement that seems to prefer continued suffering for its people to realistic compromises that would both relieve their lot and allow them more genuine political self-expression than is permitted anywhere else in the Arab world. The gradual lifting of the *cordon sanitaire* around Israel by African and Communist regimes reflects sheer boredom with the Palestinians, even among those who still put out flags to welcome Yasir Arafat in their capitals.

The cause of Palestine is still invoked by the Arab states, but their infidelity to that cause is no longer in doubt. The tempests stirring in the Iran-Iraq war concern the Arab world far more than Israel does. In any case, the Arab states' anti-Zionism never really hinged on the fate of the Palestinians. Rather, it involved their own competing ambitions as guardians of Muslim and what are called pan-Arab interests. The idea of the great Arab nation no longer mesmerizes the various groups that were supposed to be its components. Certainly that idea has achieved nothing for the Palestinians. Even Arafat himself these days seems less interested in Palestine per se than in resurrecting the virtually sovereign Palestinian ministate that existed pre-1982 in Beirut and southern Lebanon. That lost Eden, by the way, gave the world, if only it wanted to see, a horrifically vivid demonstration of what PLO rule over the West Bank might be like.

So almost two million Palestinians remain under Israeli occupation, abandoned and yet still hostage to the futilitarian idea of a PLO state. But the luck of the Palestinians has not completely run out. For another reason, they are fortunate to have the Jews as their enemies. The only reason their cause hasn't disappeared completely is the qualms of a large and articulate sector of Israelis about their

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own future as a nation if they continue as occupiers. Whatever initiative there is in the world for another attempt at a settlement between Israel and the Arabs comes, then, from the Israeli Labor Party and its leader, foreign minister in the coalition government, Shimon Peres.

Peres's latest proposal has not yet won enough support from among his own public. And it won't win that support until our government does more to encourage the project. What Peres has proposed is an international peace conference involving all the Arab states, Palestinian representatives from the territories, and the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. To those unfamiliar with Middle East politics, that may sound harmless to the point of irrelevance. In fact the proposal is radical and courageous, which is why no Israeli leader before Peres has dared to make it. After all, two of the three proposed superpower middlemen—the Soviet Union and China—don't even extend to Israel the courtesy of diplomatic recognition.

The two assumptions of Peres's enterprise are traumatic for many Israelis. They are loath to negotiate in the context of an international conference, which is easy to imagine as a gang-up on Israel. Peres appears to have secured guarantees from King Hussein that the real negotiating will be in smaller talks between Israel, resident Palestinians, and the bordering states. But that leaves the second traumatic assumption: success will require Israeli concessions in the form of tangible real estate, much tangible real estate.

The vital precondition for Israeli willingness to swallow both these assumptions is that credibly nationalist Palestinian politicians and other public figures stand up and say they are ready to negotiate alongside Jordan for new ar-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
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2.	A SNITCH IN TIME	—	1
3.	HOLY POLLING	*	2
4.	QUARTERBACK SNEAKS	2	3
5.	SUFFER THE CHILDREN	—	1
6.	WHAT DO MEN WANT?	—	1
7.	A PLACE IN THE SUN	—	1
8.	NORTHERN LIGHTWEIGHTS	—	1
9.	GROW OLD WITH ME	*	2
10.	ELI'S OTHER SONS	—	1

1. HIS DEAD BODY

Bork. The White House is being blamed for mismanaging the Bork nomination, but it's a bum rap. True, Bork's often hysterical critics framed the deciding issues, but what were the "winning" issues the White House let get away? Even Reagan in his glory days paid only lip service to the right-wing domestic agenda, and for the same reasons that shaped the effort to paint Bork as a moderate: that stuff won't play.

2. A SNITCH IN TIME

Dukakis. Can the press community claim that Hart and Biden are victims of an effective selection system, then turn around and wound Dukakis because his people greased that system? This is a system designed to eat itself. Anyway, it's hard to see how gee-whiz coverage determines which candidates (if any) have leadership qualities; it rewards those who, Reagan-like, keep giving the same speech and otherwise stay out of sight.

3. HOLY POLLING

Pat Robertson. Reverend Robertson is beginning to get a few media fans; they think he excites his followers in ways neither Bush nor Dole do, and that he can get the Big Mo. Yeah. One of Reagan's legacies is that the next president has to convince voters that he knows what he's doing. Robertson's redone himself as a businessman, but the hands-on experience he's known for is healing.

4. QUARTERBACK SNEAKS

NFL strike. Union efforts to demonize scab players as if they were Pinkerton goons were foolish. This isn't Harlan County, it's a TV game, and the American trait of applauding individual "gumption" made itself felt. Many scabs got good reviews and developed well-wishers. With no profit in attacking them, and with a frontal assault on owner greed never mounted, strikers were lying in a poorly made p.r. bed.

5. SUFFER THE CHILDREN

Child care. There's an important generational issue developing this year, but it's not what people expected. Because of the number of single parents and two-income families, child care is a major voter concern. Bruce Babbitt introduced this one, and the other candidates are already copying it. This could open the gate for many more "compassion" vote-getters.

6. WHAT DO MEN WANT?

Women. Is feminism merely 1960s intellectual residue? Far from it. Confusion over women's issues is *everywhere*, from Schroeder's tears to *Fatal Attraction*. The confused reaction to both of these is evidentiary, as is the attention Shere Hite's new book is getting despite the high sales of traditional how-to-find-a-husband titles. The Eagle Forum's day is done; feminist concerns, however dormant they have seemed recently, are deeply ingrained in the culture.

7. A PLACE IN THE SUN

Los Angeles. The quake aside, something interesting has been happening to L.A.'s image. For 40 years it's been the nation's sexy if flaky starlet of a city, though it's always wanted to be taken *seriously*. Bit by bit, that's occurring. Its art collections, architecture, theater scene, etc., are getting respectful attention.

8. NORTHERN LIGHTWEIGHTS

Canada. Admit it, you didn't follow Canadian-U.S. trade negotiations at all, and you suspect it made TV only because Peter Jennings and Robert MacNeil are from Canada. You rooted for the Tigers (Toronto never drew on the road), and the only Canadians you can name are Gordon Lightfoot and Nanook. You're following Fiji's politics more closely. Only Quebec separatists ever found the key to U.S. respect: if you can't be British, be a threat.

9. GROW OLD WITH ME

Decrepit boomers. The biggest growth industry in the country must be "eye repair" creams, the stuff that "moistens" away crow's-feet. Add in sore muscle creams, men's hair dyes, walking shoes, cholesterol- and fiber-mania, supergyms (complete with bars), and you have a major—and growing—cultural spectacle: the refusal of boomers to age.

10. ELI'S OTHER SONS

Yale. You'd think from all these upscale films about gays (*Maurice*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, etc.) that the culture, at it's top anyway, had come to terms with gayness. The noise over how gay Yale is would show how wrong you'd be. What's the problem? If it's true, it'd match the campus's phony Oxbridge architecture, wouldn't it?

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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rangements on the West Bank and in Gaza. Without these Palestinians a negotiation is an empty exercise. Even with them, negotiations might easily be undercut by some desperate maneuver of Arafat's men or by Syria's Hafez Assad, who has no interest whatsoever in a settlement between Israel and Jordan. Still, local Palestinian leaders should be encouraged to see how ill they serve their people by insisting that PLO cadres in exile do their negotiations for them. Whatever concessions Israel will be cajoled into making will be to the leadership in residence, not to international terrorist cadres.

So criticism of Peres's proposal on the tired grounds that it excludes the PLO is not just unfair but reckless. The only effects will be, first, to harden Israeli attitudes and, second, to keep appropriate Palestinians from coming forward to wrest what they can from Israel. With notable bravery, a few of these men, stern nationalists all, have dared to challenge the orthodoxy imposed on Palestinians by terror. They have begun to speak to responsible Israelis on behalf of their people. But just speaking to Israelis is a disgrace among Palestinian ultras, and therefore entails risk. Sari Nusseibeh, a political scientist at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, was forced to resign from a governing committee of the faculty because he went to articulate the Palestinian grievance directly to Peres. When news leaked out that Nusseibeh had actually met with a small delegation of Israeli members of parliament from the right-wing Likud Party, he was beaten up by young PLO thugs on the campus. The life of a Palestinian patriot who is a realist is perilous.

There are, of course, objections to Peres's proposal from the right, as well. But it is not really the international character of the proceedings, or even the involvement of the Soviet Union, that alarms Israeli right-wingers and their American supporters. These demurrers only mask a reluctance to contemplate *any* territorial compromise, even though the dissenters know that this is the sine qua non of any genuine negotiation. But Peres has begun to put such folk on the defensive about the ultimate consequence of holding on to the occupied territories and the Arabs who live there indefinitely. The nationalist right, Peres argues compellingly, endangers the Jewish national revival by denying that the absorption of nearly two million Arabs would undermine the entire Zionist enterprise.

Most of the Israeli army high command do not see the Gaza Strip—a two-by-four with nearly a million poor and largely unproductive Arabs by the year 2000—as a strategic asset. Most of the Israeli army leadership can envision safeguards on the ground that would neutralize the military risks of relinquishing most of the West Bank to an Arab sovereign power. The army understands the real cost in morale and in moral self-esteem of training generations of young men as occupiers. It is part of the glory of Israel that its generals do not wish to be reconciled to occupation. Except for Gen. Ariel Sharon and a few cohorts, in fact, the impediments to compromise in Israel do not come from the military. It is the politicians, particularly the right-wing politicians, who have lacked the will and the imagination to see a way out of the fateful embrace of the Palestinians.

Now the issue has been placed on the table again, due to a congruence of Israeli conscience and Israeli self-interest. Who, however, will come to the table? That depends on whether the Palestinians will show that crucial attribute of nationhood—a capacity for compromise. The odds are not good.

NOTEBOOK

□ BORK, FINIS: In our editorial three weeks ago voting thumbs-down on the Robert Bork nomination, we began by apologizing for past sneers at the quality of America's political dialogue and congratulating all parties for the high level of the debate. As Bork goes down to defeat, we're tempted to take all that back. The campaign against Judge Bork's elevation to the Supreme Court featured grotesque excesses of demagoguery, painting him as evil incarnate, while the campaign on his behalf, organized by the White House, was fundamentally hypocritical and dishonest. In its final days, the pro-Bork campaign went through a desperate reversal. The opening theme had been democracy: the need for judges who honor the wishes of the majority. Its closing theme was anti-democratic: the danger of letting popular sentiment select judges. This is wrong on both counts. The role of democracy in the selection of judges gives them their legitimacy; once appointed, they have the duty of sometimes overriding the democratic branches to protect fundamental values. The successful liberal campaign to torpedo Bork used techniques of mobilizing mass opinion developed by the right in the 1970s. The right tried to use them on this occasion too—only without success. The result of this episode, we predict, will not be the "politicization of the judiciary," unless that phrase refers to a revival of the Senate's legitimate authority to "advise and consent" on Supreme Court nominations, as the Constitution's authors originally intended.

□ IT'S NOT EASY to embarrass the United Nations. But the revelation that it had been presided over for ten years by an ex-Nazi and a liar did have some effect. So did the persistence of the Israeli delegation. The result was a move to open 40,000 files on suspected Nazi war criminals that the Allies had given to the U.N. after World War II. For 40 years they had been closed. This year, however, 15 of the 17 countries that control the files appeared willing to open the archives. Only France and Poland, countries that understandably do not want their actions during World War II examined carefully, objected. France has agreed to allow access to the materials, but only to those who pledge not to publish them. The archives contain the file of 25,000 people accused of Nazi war crimes. Perhaps ten percent of them are still alive. That means more than 2,000 people are still being protected. A master list of the 25,000 or so names is available—including, for example,

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the names of all 298 men who ran Auschwitz—but it includes no testimonial evidence. The U.N. War Crimes Commission meets on October 14. It is likely to accept the confidentiality requirement insisted upon by France. If so, yet another crime against memory will have been committed.

□ THERE AUTO BE A LAW:

> **General Motors** unveiled aggressively big price increases on 1988-model cars, apparently in a bid to bolster revenue and earnings.
> (Story on Page 4)
>
> —*Wall Street Journal*, September 28, page one

NOW, GM'S MOST POPULAR CARS, EQUIPPED THE WAY YOU WANT, COST LESS IN 1988.

—ad, same paper, same day, page eight
(thanks to John E. Lincoln, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

□ NOTE: TNR's June 22 review of *Bernstein: A Biography* reported several of the book's salacious allegations about Leonard Bernstein, including one relating to Gore Vidal. TNR has no independent knowledge about that allegation and apologizes to Gore Vidal for having repeated it.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

WAKE-UP CALL

PRESIDENT REAGAN has total recall of obscure events in the 1930s. When I went to interview him on October 2, I carried with me a photograph of Reagan taken in 1937 while he was making a B-movie in Monterey, California. (My grandmother is also in the photo, but never mind.) Reagan immediately named the movie, *Sergeant Murphy*, gave a detailed rendition of the plot, and even remembered being tricked into riding an unruly horse one afternoon after filming was done. I hadn't planned this as a test of his mental faculties. It just worked out that way. And he passed impressively.

He didn't do quite as well in recalling the 1980s. At least he didn't recall the recent past, and Iranamok in particular, the way White House aides have urged him to. Concede the point, they've told him, that the weapons sale to Iran amounted to an arms-for-hostages deal, or else you'll never shake the Iran-*contra* tar baby. So Reagan conceded as much in a nationally televised speech last March. But it turns out he doesn't really believe what he said. "It was not trading arms for hostages," he told me. Nor did he deal with the fellow he calls "the Khomeini." Rather, his Iranian dealings were with people who "wanted to be in a position to influence what kind of a government there would be after the Khomeini."

To Reagan, Iranamok is still a mystery. "Let me give you an ironic thing," he said. "After all the weeks of this big hearing and all the hours of testimony, they still have not come up with the answer that I was seeking. Who raised the price [of the arms]? Who got the added money? And where did it go? Not one word of evidence has ever been given on that subject. . . . That's why I appointed the Tower Commission, to try and find that out."

Reagan's feelings toward Adm. John Poindexter, his former national security adviser, and Lt. Col. Oliver North are benign. True, "they did keep me in the dark," he said. But "I feel that I have to recognize that whatever happened, they must have felt that somehow they were protecting me." Should they spend a single day in jail? "I haven't seen anything that they've done that was breaking the law." Of course, it's up to the special prosecutor to determine that, he added. Wouldn't it be best if the special prosecutor didn't indict either Poindexter or North? "Well, again, you're asking me to testify on something before knowing all the facts, but I—my own personal belief is that they were not involved in anything that was breaking the law." Does he regret having called for a special prosecutor in the first place? "Oh, I don't know whether I can say that or not. . . . I don't see how we could have not done it. We wanted to make every effort."

Reagan seemed eager to discuss Iranamok, almost to the point of obsession. He's hard to stop once he gets rolling on the subject. I couldn't prove it, but listening to Reagan, I was more convinced than ever that Iranamok has taken a heavy toll on him. Not just driving down his poll numbers, but deflating his optimism and saddening him. His political goals are the same as ever, but the zip is gone. He talked about how tax increases only lead to a bigger deficit and agreed that slashing the tax rate on capital gains from 28 percent to 15 percent might actually raise revenue. "But you can imagine how much chance I'd have of getting that done?" he sighed.

As determined as the president sounds to get Robert Bork confirmed as a Supreme Court justice, he isn't betting the Oval Office on the nomination. He doesn't dispute that he started his pro-Bork campaign late, waiting until opponents "had created a kind of a wrong impression" about Bork. And Reagan is willing to go only so far to win. "The other side was making it an ideological and political contest," he complained. But Reagan said he is unwilling to respond with an ideological and political drive of his own. "Then we would have been as bad as they were. Then it would have been a political contest." Notice the past tense. I asked Reagan his reaction to hearing Senators Teddy Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum

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and others challenge Bork's moral fitness. This was a gopher ball of a question. Reagan bunted. "It was a little bit of the pot calling the kettle black, wasn't it?" I paused to let him say more. He didn't.

Reagan has mellowed on the Soviets after meeting Mikhail Gorbachev. "He is completely different," Reagan said, from past Soviet leaders. "I think all of us that have dealt with him and with [Soviet Foreign] Minister [Eduard] Shevardnadze feel that." Has Gorbachev abandoned the Soviet goal of world domination? Reagan said he couldn't offer an opinion on that, then did, sort of. "Maybe [Gorbachev] just hasn't been there long enough, but he is the first Russian leader that has not gone before their great Party congress and reaffirmed his determination to carry out the Marxian idea of a one-world Communist state," Reagan said. "He has never said anything of that kind publicly. All the others did."

Nor is Reagan suspicious of Gorbachev's willingness to scrap three times the number of warheads as the United States in order to get an arms treaty on intermediate-range missiles. If Gorbachev has an ulterior motive, such as promoting a new era of détente in which the United States will ultimately make concessions on nuclear arms, Reagan isn't aware of it. "I do believe that he is faced with an internal problem and an economic problem that is so great that he could see advantages for themselves in trying to solve that problem with reducing the great cost of military buildup." Mightn't Gorbachev be angling for Reagan to give up the Strategic Defense Initiative? "No, I think he knows by now that, in my mind, SDI is not a bargaining chip. As a matter of fact, I have told him to his face that if and when that system proves to be what we think it can be, we're willing to make it available to them and to the world." Gorbachev wasn't thrilled by the offer, Reagan said. "He acted as if he couldn't quite believe that."

The old Reagan isn't entirely gone. After 20 minutes of talk, Reagan reached inside his suit jacket. "I have something in my pocket," he said. It was a note card with figures Reagan had scribbled from an op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* in 1984. Reagan had found it while going through his desk, and he figured it would be useful to his speechwriters. Anyway, he started reading from it. "The elderly have a higher after-tax income than the national average, and counting in-kind benefits, only 3.7 of them, 3.7 percent are poor." He went on. "In 1983 the government spent more on farmers than on the poor, and the farmers' average net worth is $183,000."

I attempted to change the subject. No, the president said, he has no intention of resigning before his term ends and letting George Bush take over. Then he asked, "You want another figure? Remember that Johnson, LBJ, gave us a Great Society program, the War on Poverty. Poverty won, incidently. From 1965 to 1980, through 1980, in those 15 years, the federal budget increased roughly to five times what it had been in '65. The deficit increased to 38 times what it had been in 1965." That I hadn't known.

FRED BARNES

THE PRESS

KNOCK ON WOODWARD

UNTIL A DAY or two before Bob Woodward's new book on former CIA Director William Casey was published on September 27, its title was a big secret. No review copies were distributed prior to publication, except to the reviewer for the *Washington Post*, Woodward's paper. When excerpts were offered for serialization, interested newspapers were told only that it was a book by Woodward on the CIA, nothing more. The publisher, Simon and Schuster, didn't keep a manuscript of the book at its offices in New York, ostensibly out of fear it would fall into the wrong hands and Woodward's revelations would become public knowledge prematurely. Those who read the book before publication—Simon and Schuster's lawyers, the Book of the Month Club, *Newsweek* editors, etc.—had to do so behind closed doors and also promise, in writing, to keep the contents confidential. The manuscript was never sent through the mail or even by Federal Express. When Mike Wallace of "60 Minutes" needed a copy before interviewing Woodward, a senior publicist at Simon and Schuster handcarried one to him. "We wouldn't trust a messenger or anything," said the publicist, Julia Knickerbocker.

This is hype, very clever hype. Of course there was never any doubt that Woodward's book, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987*, would be a best seller, if only because of the author. But by shrouding *Veil* in extraordinary and well-publicized secrecy, Woodward and his publisher have transformed the book into a national topic of conversation. Less than a week after it was published, *Veil* was in its third printing, with 700,000 copies in print.

The most transparent ploy in the hyping of *Veil* was the refusal to divulge the title before publication. In the Simon and Schuster catalog, the book was called "Untitled on the Secret Wars of the CIA, Bob Woodward." The reason: national security. "It's the code name for a covert operation," Woodward told *Washingtonian*, "and I don't want to alert people to its existence." If that were true, then he should have given the book a different title. Instead, as of September 27, he alerted people to Veil's existence. But it turns out that code name Veil wasn't such a big secret after all. In the *Wall Street Journal* last July, David Rogers and John Walcott noted that memos written by Oliver North about the Iran and *contra* projects and "entered in the NSC's filing system were kept in a compartment, which used to be code named 'Veil.' The compartment was reserved for covert action memos."

Woodward and Simon and Schuster aren't entirely to blame for the hype. The media played along. Woodward and his publisher, after all, have a legitimate interest in publicizing the book. They used reverse psychology. Rather than pepper the media with releases and blurbs, they acted as if Woodward's disclosures were too explosive, too far-reaching in their impact on the Reagan administration

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and the intelligence community, to mention before publication. They sought to capitalize on the mystique that surrounds Woodward, the best investigative journalist of his generation and perhaps the best ever. Their message was: if Woodward wrote it, you know it's a blockbuster.

Both "60 Minutes," the most popular news show on television, and *U.S. News and World Report* fell for it. On the day serialization began in 49 newspapers, Woodward was shown in a taped interview with Mike Wallace, which was followed by a live appearance with Wallace. The introduction by Wallace was more than Woodward could have dreamed of. Wallace said many questions "still linger about the late director of the CIA," who "died conveniently, even mysteriously" last May before he could testify before the Iran-*contra* committee. "Well, it turns out that Bill Casey may have spoken from the grave," through Woodward, "about Ronald Reagan, illegal assassination plots, and what Bill Casey really knew of the diversion of moneys to the Nicaraguan *contras*."

U.S News, which obtained galleys of *Veil*, was even more breathless. The book "may establish a benchmark for historians of the Reagan era," wrote Mel Elfin. It "plows more new ground than a dozen tractors in Iowa." Elfin insisted the intelligence community was terrified of Woodward's revelations, anticipating "the publication of the book about the way Paris anticipated the arrival of the German army in 1940." Quivering officials were widely reported (but never actually spotted) in the days before publication. "Government officials are bracing themselves," wrote Barbara Matusow in *Washingtonian*. "And politicians in Washington are breaking into a cold—if unobtrusive—sweat," wrote Ryan Murphy in the *Miami Herald*.

In truth, there wasn't that much to sweat about. Woodward turned up one striking revelation, that Casey had arranged with Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Washington, for a Saudi assassination squad to kill Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, the Hezbollah leader in Lebanon. But the scheme went awry, Woodward writes, and 80 innocent people were killed in an explosion. Fadlallah escaped injury. CIA involvement in this incident was not news, since Woodward himself had reported in 1985 that a runaway mission indirectly linked to the CIA had staged the assassination attempt. The assassination part was new. But it is unclear whether a plot to kill Fadlallah violated the U.S. ban on assassinations, a ban reaffirmed by President Reagan, or was merely a skirmish in the ongoing war against terrorists.

The book is studded with fascinating details about well-known CIA practices, especially the funneling of money to friendly leaders around the world such as Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of Dominica. Woodward discloses, for instance, that U.S. officials learned the *Achille Lauro* hijackers were still in Egypt from the satellite intercept of a phone call by Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Woodward also draws a riveting, and sometimes favorable, picture of Casey, who once personally put an electronic bug in a foreign leader's office.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But some of the material in the book is old, some downright hackneyed. That Casey found Reagan lazy is hardly an eye-popping disclosure, since nearly everyone who's worked for Reagan has made the same complaint. What has sustained media interest is an account of a four-minute interview Woodward says he had with Casey in Georgetown University Hospital after Casey had undergone surgery for a brain tumor. Again, secrecy has added to the hype. Woodward won't say exactly when the interview took place, whether it was day or night, and who let him into the guarded hospital room. The CIA has unintentionally egged the media on by saying that its security personnel were on duty at the hospital 24 hours a day. It does not say flatly that Woodward, who had been turned away from the hospital on January 22, didn't get into Casey's room later. Instead, it refers further questions to Casey's widow, Sophia, who claims that Woodward is lying. Either she or her daughter, Bernadette, was in the room, 24 hours a day, the entire time Casey was hospitalized, she says.

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I believe Woodward, but who cares? Woodward writes that he asked Casey if he had known of the diversion to the *contras* of profits from the arms sale to Iran. Casey nodded yes, according to Woodward. "Why?" Woodward asked. "I believed," Casey answered, then fell asleep. Woodward takes this as confirmation that Casey masterminded the diversion. Assuming that's the case, where's the news? There hasn't been the slightest doubt for months that Casey was involved. John Walcott at the *Wall Street Journal* reported as early as last December that Casey was both "the driving force" behind the *contra* cause and tied closely to Colonel North, who spearheaded the diversion. It stood to reason that Casey knew about the diversion. And North's testimony last July before the Iran-*contra* committee laid to rest any lingering doubts about Casey's involvement.

Besides, even if you believe Woodward's little scene, Casey's words are ambiguous. So much so that the *Post* declined to publish a story on the deathbed interview when Woodward first told editors of it several months ago. "I think it's still ambiguous," managing editor Leonard Downie told the *Washington Times*. "And for that reason we did not run it as a front-page leader." Robert Kaiser, the *Post*'s assistant managing editor for national news, told *Newsday*, "Here's a guy with a brain tumor, and it's the only question Woodward gets to ask him, and his answer is a nod. It isn't what a newspaper editor would regard as confirmation of an extremely sensitive news story."

Fine, but now the *Post* has joined in the hype of Woodward's last encounter with Casey. Its high standards have vanished. The hospital interview was cited in the *Post*'s front-page summary of *Veil* on September 26. And it was the central incident in the last of six daily excerpts from the book published in the *Post*. On the front page, the excerpt was headlined, "THE LAST INTERVIEW: 'I BELIEVED.' " The subhead said, "Casey, Asked If He Knew of Contra Diversion, Finally Nodded Yes." The excerpt culminated in Casey's hospital room. There was no hint that Casey's final words might be ambiguous, nor any suggestion that Woodward's intrusion into the room of a mortally ill man might be unseemly. *Newsweek* went further still in hyping the scene, not only including it in a long excerpt but adding a full-page drawing of Woodward and Casey in the hospital room.

Insignificant as it is, the deathbed interview has taken on a life of its own. Wallace dwelt on it on "60 Minutes." How can Woodward "be so sure" that Casey was the godfather of the diversion? "Because he says the last conversation he had with Casey took place in the director's hospital room. He eluded CIA security after failing on his first try, and finally came face to face with the director. And he swears it was then that Casey gave him, in effect, a deathbed confession." Wallace's questioning of Woodward was shoddy. The real reason Woodward can now be sure that Casey was the mastermind is because North has testified, at length and under oath, to that effect. What Wallace should have asked was: You didn't really know the truth until North spoke, right? I'm sure Woodward would have answered honestly.

Woodward is such a legend in the newspaper business that he casts a spell over his colleagues. Articles about him—and there have been plenty lately—tend to nominate him for sainthood and thus add to the hype. Take the *Miami Herald*, the tough, skeptical, courageous paper that brought down Democratic presidential candidate Gary Hart. It took the measure of Woodward and came up with this anecdote, offered without a wink. Woodward's researcher had an injured cat, and he offered to pay the medical expenses. The researcher declined. "Woodward kept coming at her," the *Herald* recounted. "Think of it as a loan from my daughter, who loves animals," he told her. And the interview by *Herald* writer Ryan Murphy took place "in the shadow of an Alfred Hitchcock movie poster, a black-and-white promotion for *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Such irony." Such hype.

FRED BARNES

The self-righteousness trap.

DUKE OF PIETY

FOR DEMOCRATS, the pattern has become sickeningly familiar: a press revelation sends a candidate into a stall. Despite vows to carry on, the campaign is soon caught in a seemingly irreversible tailspin. Last week Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, the front-runner by default at this point in the Democratic demolition derby, became the latest Democratic presidential candidate battling to avoid a fatal crash.

But unlike Gary Hart or Joe Biden, Dukakis was not the victim of personal foibles made public or a wolf-pack press corps. Rather, he was the victim of his own ineptitude in handling the revelation that his top two aides—campaign manager and alter ego John Sasso and Paul Tully—launched the video torpedo that sank Biden's campaign.

The news that any other campaign had prepared the Biden-Kinnock video might not have been a front-page story. Rival candidates have long acted as political watchdogs, and the comparative video was nothing but the truth electronically (if secretly) revealed. But Michael Dukakis was uniquely vulnerable to such a backlash because of all the candidates, he had most stridently declared that he was above that sort of shenanigans. The damage was compounded when the candidate who billed himself as the ultimate manager mismanaged the event from start to finish.

As a result, the governor found the very rationale for his candidacy in doubt. "There was no ideological agenda to the Dukakis candidacy," said one pundit. "It was totally a candidacy of the person. When you run that way, and the personality gets damaged, there's nothing left to stand behind."

The problems began for Dukakis when *Time* magazine revealed that someone inside the Duke's camp had produced and distributed the now-infamous "attack video" that set the national media on the trail of Biden's rhetorical expropriations. Dukakis learned of the *Time* story the Sun-

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day before it ran and instructed Sasso, his trusted alter ego, to look into the matter—without ever asking Sasso if he knew who might have been responsible. It took three days for Sasso to report back the news that he was the culprit, in which time the governor had already issued a self-righteous denial and questioned the veracity of the *Time* account. "We have no knowledge of it," Dukakis told a Monday press conference. "We don't believe it happened."

But on Tuesday, only hours before a gala fund-raiser at Boston's World Trade Center, Sasso came clean, and offered the governor his resignation. Dukakis refused it, telling a press conference the next morning that Sasso, though guilty of a "very, very serious lack of judgment," would remain after only a two-week leave of absence. "He is one of the most extraordinary public servants I have encountered," said the governor.

Sasso more than anyone else was responsible for Michael Dukakis's 1982 resurrection after the governor's humiliating 1978 primary defeat at the hands of conservative Democrat Ed King. Sasso, the consummate inside player, was also the architect of the successful second term that brought Dukakis national attention. Well-connected with the media from his days as Geraldine Ferraro's campaign manager, Sasso planted and nurtured the idea of a Dukakis presidential candidacy, first with the governor himself and then with the press, back when pundits scoffed at the notion. Under Sasso's guidance, Dukakis grew from just another of the dwarfs to a candidate whom *Newsweek*, in anointing him front-runner earlier this summer, called the only Democrat with stature.

Indeed, it was almost impossible for any observer of Massachusetts politics—let alone the governor—to imagine Dukakis without Sasso at his side. But less than four hours after the governor's reprieve Sasso was gone, deciding for himself, as well as for Dukakis, that he simply could not remain.

BUT THE STAIN on Dukakis's reputation for almost puritanical high-mindedness remains. For almost two decades Dukakis had run as the candidate of rectitude. Elected as a reformer in 1974 on the self-righteous slogan "Michael Dukakis Should Be Governor," he had spearheaded the dismantling of the Irish regular Democratic establishment that had dominated Massachusetts politics since the palmy days of James Michael Curley. After a brief stint out of office, the man known among Massachusetts pols as "Michael the Good" returned as the consensus good-government candidate leading the crusade against the cronyism and corruption of the King administration. He had taken that same self-righteous tone in the presidential contest. In early July, when Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri dared question his stands on trade and energy issues, Dukakis snappishly accused Gephardt of taking the low road. "When someone starts attacking, his campaign is in trouble," he said in early July, adding, "I think the American people are sick to death of this kind of thing." Using Gephardt's "attacks" as justification, he insisted on an Iowa debate, supposedly to set the record straight—a stratagem that not coincidentally set him apart from the rest of the pack as Gephardt's chief rival in that state.

Dukakis's high horse carried him through that debate and inched him into the position of front-runner. But once his chief aide was caught in the act of negative campaigning—even if it would scarcely have raised an eyebrow a campaign or two ago—the high horse bucked. The campaign that ran on high dudgeon was exposed as no less sleazy than any of the rest. Worse yet, it stood accused of putting its own interests above those of the entire Democratic Party. The video went out just as Biden was set to lead the fight against Supreme Court nominee Judge Robert Bork.

That perception could have dire repercussions for Dukakis in Iowa. The governor must do well there if he is to maintain his commanding lead in New Hampshire, a state where his status as almost a favorite son is his early ace in the hole. "The word coming out of party circles is that it was treason to put the interests of the Dukakis campaign before the larger interests of the party in the Bork hearing," says a prominent consultant to the Democratic National Committee. "In the small, intensely partisan universe of Iowa's caucuses, this is the ultimate sin. I think they [Dukakis's handlers] just have to take Iowa out of their calculations."

A poll conducted shortly after the flap showed Dukakis's basic support relatively unchanged in Iowa, although his unfavorable rating has almost doubled. If in fact Dukakis's strategists must remove Iowa from their calculations, the governor's grand strategy must be retooled. The campaign was hoping for a first- or second-place finish in Iowa, followed by wins in Maine, New Hampshire, and Minnesota (part of whose delegate-selection process may occur on February 23), to generate the momentum needed to carry him through the March 8 Super Tuesday primaries.

DUKAKIS MUST ALSO worry about the way his mishandling of the Sasso affair undercut his vaunted reputation for managerial competence. After the revelations of the Iranamok scandal, Dukakis's aides had hoped his reputed mastery of governance would be a strong selling point to an electorate worried that rogue elements were rampaging out of control in Washington. Instead, in vacillating a full day, Dukakis exhibited a reluctance to make the most essential kind of political decision.

Locally, the *Boston Herald*, which sheds objectivity and perspective with equal ease, was comparing the Sasso affair to Watergate. But the more instructive analogy was to a different administration: one headed by a man who claims not to know what his top aides are doing, who does not ask the tough questions at the critical times, and who exhibits extraordinary reluctance to dismiss close associates. The comparison may be overstated, but at this stage presidential politics is less about detail than metaphor. And Dukakis has allowed the Reagan metaphor to be hung around his neck.

On September 25 Dukakis had pledged that "in a Dukakis administration, it will be the commander in chief—not

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an admiral or a lieutenant colonel—who will be accountable." Less than a week later, with his campaign reeling, the governor was reduced to insisting that "any chief executive knows—a governor, let alone a president—you do not necessarily know, at any one time, everything that is happening around you." For Michael Dukakis, there could be no more embarrassing admission.

SCOT LEHIGH AND FRANCIS J. CONNOLLY

Scot Lehigh and Francis J. Connolly write about politics for the *Boston Phoenix*.

Unbelievable Evan Mecham.

ARIZONA AIRHEAD

THIS SUMMER, two weeks after recall petitions were formally filed with the Arizona secretary of state, Phoenix rock radio station KDKB invited listeners to "call in your Mecham jokes." (Sample: "Why do cats run around with their tails straight up? To show off their Mecham buttons.") In September, *Doonesbury* spent a week's worth of strips skewering Arizona's chief executive. One of the hottest selling publications in Phoenix is *The Official Evan Mecham Joke Book*—$3.50. Right after he canceled Martin Luther King Day, the announcement went out that Governor Mecham had canceled Easter. Why? He heard the eggs were colored.

In state and out, Arizona's governor is a laughingstock. When Arizonans aren't laughing, they're signing petitions. The state constitution permits recall of any elected official within 18 months of taking office. It only took three months to gather a quarter million signatures, more than the 25 percent of the electorate needed. What began as a fringe campaign in July now seems certain to bring about an election in May if the governor does not resign in the meantime.

Mecham's victory in 1986 was a two-part fluke. First, his opponent in the Republican primary, state House Majority Leader Burton Barr, did not take him seriously (Barr's massive TV blitz was set to begin the day *after* the primary); second, in the general election, millionaire Bill Schultz, a prominent Democrat disaffected with *his* party's primary winner, former State School Superintendent Carolyn Warner, jumped into the gubernatorial race as an independent to make it a three-way contest. The combination gave Mecham a plurality.

Mecham was not unknown in 1986. His views on issues such as Martin Luther King (a Communist and philanderer), the Constitution ("inspired by God"), women (best left at home), abortion (murder), and homosexuals ("against God's law") were no secret. A successful Pontiac dealer, he had served one term in the state legislature and then lost a bid for the U.S. Senate. After four unsuccessful runs for governor, he won in 1986.

Mecham has not grown in office. The first confrontation had to do with Mecham's campaign promise to rescind Martin Luther King Day. The year before, a bill calling for a King holiday died on the House floor after passing the Senate. Governor Bruce Babbitt thereupon declared the holiday by executive order. On his first day in office, Mecham issued a counterorder, with the attorney general's blessing, saying that Babbitt had declared the holiday only to further his presidential ambitions. But beyond that, Mecham is of the school of thought that Martin Luther King does not *deserve* a holiday.

The cancellation brought national, even international, notoriety. The largest street demonstration in Phoenix's history was held on the national holiday. More significant for a state where tourism is a major industry, out-of-state groups began canceling their Arizona convention bookings. With some resorts facing rumored 90 percent vacancy rates, the panic became so intense that the state's director of tourism, a Mecham appointee, began to criticize the governor in public. By June 1987 the pressure led the governor to declare the third Sunday in January to be the holiday. Few ires were assuaged, the joke being "Take Sunday off."

Through it all, Mecham insisted that the cancellations were mere bagatelles, that, in response to his stand, far more people were induced to come to Arizona than were repelled. When the National Basketball Association announced the cancellation of a planned meeting he said, "What's the matter with those guys? Don't they know how many white people watch basketball?"

MANY OF MECHAM'S appointments have angered his own party. He appointed a former legislator and Mormon bishop (the church has no professional clergy) to be his education liaison. Testifying in the legislature in favor of an anti-evolution bill, the bishop stated, "Teachers have no business telling a student the Earth is round if the student believes it's flat." A woman appointed to the State Board of Education was quoted as saying, "The feminist movement is dominated by lesbians, . . . working women cause divorce, and drug education should consist of teaching children to stay out of their parents' medicine cabinets." Another woman hired to work on the governor's anti-drug campaign was given 20 minutes to clear out her desk when she recommended that a speech on drug abuse be expanded to include the drug alcohol. Two appointees to the State Board of Medical Examiners, one a former head of Arizona Right to Life, the other the father of a right-wing state legislator, had been previously censured by the same board for overprescribing amphetamines. All are paid less than the prevailing wage as Mecham's way of achieving "economy in government."

Mecham is a man of strong beliefs. His book, *Come Back, America*, laments our "leaderless drift" toward socialism, the first step being the "killing off of the U.S. auto industry." (Remember, Mecham is a Pontiac dealer.) "Out of the resulting economic chaos [will come] a socialist dictator-

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ship." A proclaimed "constitutionalist," he is openly ambivalent about democracy where "the one man one vote ends up being mob rule." He is close to W. Cleon Skousen, whose book on the U.S. Constitution (*The Making of America*) has achieved notoriety because of its "happy slave" view, to wit: "If the pickaninnies ran naked it was generally from choice. . . ." When queried about the infamous "pickaninny" quote, Mecham vociferously defends Skousen's book and claims that when he was a boy the term was commonly used, even among blacks, without derogatory meaning. (Phoenix newspapers later reported that no blacks lived in Mecham's home county.)

Mecham, even more conservative than the very conservative dailies in the state, seems to be at constant loggerheads with the press. The editorial pages of the conservative Arizona *Republic* and the Tucson *Citizen* did not endorse him in the primary. The two have not backed the recall, not because they support Mecham but because they oppose recalls in principle. The Phoenix dailies take every opportunity to point out the governor's shortcomings, going so far as to criticize his wife's dress.

A few months into his term, a *Phoenix Gazette* columnist, John Kolbe, brother of Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe, wrote a column so offensive to the governor that Mecham declared him a "non-person." Although he couldn't physically keep Kolbe out of press conferences, the governor wouldn't answer his questions or acknowledge his presence. When fellow journalists asked Kolbe's questions for him, Mecham stalked out.

RECALL ORGANIZERS are not party regulars. The originator is Ed Buck, an avowed homosexual, and Mecham's homophobia occupies a prominent place on his agenda. (Early on, Mecham's staff briefly circulated a bumper sticker that read, "Queer Ed Buck's Recall.") When told by a caller on one of his regular call-in show appearances that he had homosexuals working in his administration, Mecham said, "Send me a list." Subsequently there was one resignation for "personal reasons." The governor has criticized the president of Arizona State University for allowing a gay and lesbian student group on campus. So it's not surprising that Mecham's initial response to recall was "If a band of homosexuals and a few dissident Democrats can do that, why heavens, the state deserves what else they can get."

Recently Mecham has started taking the recall more seriously. In late August he began meeting with minority groups, first blacks and then Hispanics. In early September he mailed an eight-page, four-color tabloid advertising the accomplishments of his administration to 950,000 registered voters. He has established a "war on drugs" and a campaign against abortion and "porn." In late September he sent out a letter to 25,000 conservatives around the country asking them either to move to Arizona and register to vote or, barring that, to contribute to the $1.2 million war chest he needs in the next 45 days to "fight the militant liberal and homosexual lobby" trying to ruin him.

Not surprisingly, the Republicans are nervous. Officially, the party opposes the recall as a Democratic plot, not because they love the governor. For elected Republican officials, Mecham is a disaster. A Republican state senator from Tucson said in July on the Senate floor, "Evan Mecham's point of view is not shared by the majority of mainstream Republicans. . . . His statements have given him a lock on the bigot vote, the anti-intellectual vote, and the homophobic vote. . . . I would rather lose with that opposition than win with that support." The state's most visible Republicans have not rallied around. The week that the Recall Committee announced it had achieved its minimum number of signatures, Mecham started a "Think Before You Ink" campaign with TV spots featuring selected Republican notables. Conspicuously absent were Barry Goldwater, Goldwater's successor, Senator John McCain, and three of Arizona's four Republican congressmen.

The Democratic leadership is keeping a low profile, not wanting to lend merit to Mecham's charge that the recall is a Democratic plot. Buck has publicly criticized the party for its failure to endorse the recall. Many individual Democrats are active, and prominent elected officials such as Babbitt, Representative Morris Udall, and former gubernatorial candidate and primary winner Carolyn Warner have signed petitions.

The critical day is in January when the secretary of state certifies that there is a sufficient number of valid signatures and informs the governor that she will call an election in May unless he resigns. If he doesn't, his name goes automatically on the ballot, but the constitution allows others to circulate nominating petitions as well. This creates an interesting dilemma for both Democrats and Republicans. If no one else runs, it's a simple yes or no vote whether to retain Mecham; and if Mecham goes, the secretary of state fills out the unexpired term. But if others run, Mecham could be retained by an even smaller plurality than in 1986.

The smart dump-Mecham strategy would be to run no one else so that the election is a simple recall. But this won't work if Mecham finds a "ringer" candidate, someone so bad he makes Mecham look good. To counter the ringer problem and to eliminate in advance the crackpot fringe candidates of which Arizona has its share, the parties are quietly looking for a "consensus" candidate, even though consensus flies in the face of recent Arizona history.

Mecham got into office because he was underestimated, so it is not beyond the realm of possibility that he could recover. But the September letter has garnered another round of bad national publicity, making the network news, raising little money, and giving new currency to a finalist in the best Mecham joke contest: What's a pickaninny? That's how Arizona elects a governor.

PETER GOUDINOFF AND SHEILA TOBIAS

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A survey of the Democratic candidates' foreign policies.

TOO GOOD FOR THIS WORLD

BY MORTON M. KONDRACKE

IT TURNS OUT that there's more than his sex life that Gary Hart didn't level with the voters about. While a candidate for president, he neglected to mention that he's infatuated with Mikhail Gorbachev. He revealed himself, however, in a September 10 speech in Philadelphia, in which he acted as though every good wish that an American might harbor for a new Soviet leader was absolutely fulfilled in Gorbachev.

"There is no doubt in my mind," gushed Hart, "that [Gorbachev] represents the possibility of historic change in the Soviet Union. Indeed, one day historians may rank Gorbachev's *perestroika* along with the Revolution of 1917 as a great turning point in Russian history."

Hart said that Gorbachev was even a model for us Americans. "While we in the United States have only begun to debate whether the postwar policy of containment is still effective, the Soviets seem to have jumped a generation in age and several generations in outlook by selecting such a leader. . . . Gorbachev seeks to do what we should have undertaken long ago—the reallocation of financial and technological resources, and of human ingenuity, from nuclear weapons research and development to revitalization and modernization of the domestic economy."

Hart exhibited not one shred of doubt that Gorbachev is anything other than a "profoundly different, smart, reform-minded Soviet leader," and suggested basing the future of American foreign policy on that assumption by, among other things, limiting Star Wars in exchange for Soviet reductions in offensive missiles, reforming conventional defenses, and eventually converting U.S.-Soviet military competition into "cooperative ventures in our mutual self-interest." He envisioned "scientific joint ventures . . . humanitarian efforts to eradicate world malnutrition. . . . Or, let us even dream a little. Why not an American-Soviet Youth Corps in the Third World, young teachers, doctors, agronomists, and engineers who would teach, heal, cultivate, and build instead of establishing military bases and weapons that kill?"

There's certainly nothing wrong with dreaming a little about a détente that might emerge. What's dangerous—at least in a potential president—is the assumption that Gorbachev is on the same pacific wavelength. Would we ever have found out during the presidential race what was actually in Gary Hart's head? It turns out that Donna Rice may have been a geopolitical blessing, the salvation of America's national security interests.

Among those whom Gary Hart left behind as Democratic candidates for president (and also shadow candidate Mario Cuomo), less euphoria prevails about Gorbachev. This year, the candidates seem less inclined than in past campaigns to vie with each other to please left-wing lobbies by announcing which weapons systems they will abandon before negotiations with the Soviets even begin. Some of the candidates are striving to convince voters that they are "strong" and "tough" by describing themselves repeatedly as such. And in candidate debates, lo and behold, some of the Democrats are even criticizing each other for having a foreign policy that's too soft.

What's going on here? The main thing is that it's finally dawned on the Democrats—many of them, anyway—that they have lost four out of the last five presidential elections at least partly because they were perceived as the party of foreign policy weakness. It also helps that 11 Southern states have banded together to schedule their primaries on the same date, March 8. The candidates seem persuaded that Southerners remain more conservative than voters elsewhere, and are tailoring their foreign policy messages accordingly.

The leader of the look-South movement is Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, who has set a new tone of foreign policy realism in his speeches and has used two recent candidate debates to police the party for signs of softheadedness. His rivals—especially his chief target, Representative Richard Gephardt—accuse him of trying to get noticed by picking fights. If so, he has succeeded. After each of the last two debates, in Des Moines on September 27 and in Miami on October 5, the chief item of press attention was that Gore was distancing himself from the Democratic pack by assailing them from the right.

Gore is hardly a right-wing Democrat. His Americans for Democratic Action rating is 70, compared with 30 for Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia and 35 for Senator John Stennis of Mississippi. The superhawk American Security Council gives Gore a 20 rating, compared with 90 for Nunn, 100 for Stennis, and 100 for Republican reactionary Jesse Helms. Furthermore, there are good grounds for wondering if Gore's hawkishness isn't just a campaign ploy. Unlike Nunn or even Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, Gore has been a consistent foe of military aid to the *contras* and of Star Wars, and his votes on nuclear freeze resolutions in the early 1980s are practically identical to those of Gephardt and Senator Paul Simon.

Still, Gore is doing something helpful for the Democratic Party and himself—setting a standard of moderation for all the candidates to be judged by and encouraging other candidates to resist the demands of left-wing litmus tes-

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ters. On Gorbachev, for example, Gore has adopted a line similar to that best enunciated by Bradley in a speech this summer in Chautauqua, New York—one of rooting for Soviet reform, but wary of overoptimism.

In a speech in Washington on October 1, Gore said that "Gorbachev's efforts to restructure the Soviet economy have inspired hope that the deeply ingrained pattern of fear and hostility between us might be broken." But, he added, "we do not know whether the Soviets are serious about moderating the totalitarian character of their society and the coercive character of their foreign relations." He said, "We must find out."

In the same speech, Gore blasted away at his rivals, though not by name, declaring that "some in my party seem to question [American] interests and seem reluctant to defend them. Some seem to believe we can have American diplomacy without ever having to use American power. I reject that naive notion. Some seem to believe that we can have a foreign policy that takes no risks. I know that isn't so. Some seem to believe that international institutions can solve all our problems for us. They are part of the solution, but sometimes we must act alone . . . "

As Gephardt aides and others observe, this "some say" tack has been taken before by Democratic candidates—notably, in 1984 by Senators Ernest Hollings of South Carolina and John Glenn of Ohio, and by former Florida Governor Reubin Askew. Moderation got them precisely nowhere. Yet there is a difference. The 1984 moderates tended to back off when the going got rough. Except for Askew, all the candidates found a way to define the nuclear freeze so they could endorse it and clamber aboard a moving bandwagon. This year, though, Gore is playing a confrontation game.

In interviews and candidate debates, he names the names he left out of the Washington speech. All of his five opponents, he notes, originally opposed U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf. (Now many of them say they always favored U.S. participation in a multilateral force.) In the Iowa debate, Gore took out after Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis for telling David Broder of the *Washington Post* that he might withdraw U.S. troops from Korea to Japan to punish the Seoul regime's human rights violations. He also went after Gephardt for acceding to the litmus demand of the Iowa peace group STARPAC to oppose flight testing of missile systems, an idea that Gore said would undermine nuclear deterrence.

In the Miami debate, sponsored by the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, Gore followed up by attacking Dukakis and the Rev. Jesse Jackson for opposing the invasion of Grenada, and distinguished himself from all his rivals by favoring the $3.5 million in humanitarian "maintenance aid" for the Nicaraguan *contras* that the U.S. House had just voted. As Gephardt reminded the audience, Gore has voted "18 or 20 times" against military aid for the *contras*, but his opponents handed him a way to outflank them for the benefit of Southern audiences. "All I have to do is say the things the others are afraid to say," Gore commented afterward.

Will this work to secure Gore the nomination? Even before the publicity generated by the Iowa and Miami debates, Gore was coming in second to Jackson in Southern polls, and he got the endorsement of Committed 88, an influential group of Florida activists headed by state House Speaker John Mills. Still, Gore has problems. Even though he is effective in debate, he is a leaden stump speaker. And, to whatever extent he heads right for Southern consumption, he damages his cause in isolationist Iowa. Since he entered the campaign late, though, he never had much prospect of victory in Iowa anyway. Now, when he loses, he can claim it was on account of his national security principles.

GORE'S LIKELIEST RIVAL for support among moderate and conservative white Southerners is Gephardt, who is trying to tailor a message that also plays well in Iowa, where he's currently leading. Gephardt aides say this is possible because his Iowa base is not among superdovish "internationalists," who favor Dukakis, Simon, and Jackson, but among "domestics"—labor activists and farmers attracted by his trade, economic, and agriculture policies.

On foreign policy, Gephardt has recently undergone a transformation basically urged upon him by Southern congressional supporters, 35 of whom have endorsed him. As recently as August 20, Gephardt was blaming the Reagan administration for most of the world's problems, and doing so in language designed to set liberals aflutter. Before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, for example, Gephardt said, "We've seen the Reagan definition of vision and credibility abroad—a private war in Latin America where Somocistas, murderers, and drug smugglers are compared by the president to the patriots who founded our nation."

Gephardt has not switched positions on the *contras*, but he certainly has changed his tone. In a speech at American University in Washington on September 25, he said that "the Democratic nominee cannot be against every new weapons system and earn the trust of the American people. And if that is our posture we don't deserve to win the presidency. To be credible on defense, we've got to say what we're for as Democrats, not just what we're against."

Gephardt has taken up the old Gary Hart line of urging a more effective (though not more costly) defense, and he has found some weapons systems to be in favor of, in response to polls showing that voters want a candidate who deals in specifics. Gephardt favors the mobile, single-warhead Midgetman missile (a concept invented by Gore), the Stealth bomber, and the D-5 submarine missile. He thus can advocate retention of the traditional U.S. nuclear triad and oppose the MX, B-1 bomber, and (as all the Democrats do) Star Wars.

Gephardt also is taking the Bradley approach to Gorbachev: "Confrontation need not be our permanent condition if both sides reach behind the tired visions of the past. . . . But, if *glasnost* proves to have a hollow ring, if the Soviets are pursuing only a public relations peace, they will find a powerfully resolute America."

In Miami Gore accused Gephardt of saying one thing in Iowa and another in the South. Indeed, he did, but Gore

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provided the opening. In Iowa, Gore assailed Gephardt for signing on to the missile test ban, but failed to call attention to Gephardt's new hawkishness. Then in Miami, Gephardt played the hawk by criticizing former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt for seeming to favor a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons. He went on to make a stirring speech about how for 40 years the defense of Europe has depended upon U.S. nuclear weapons. The Miami debate was not broadcast on Iowa television.

Gephardt and his aides deny they are saying one thing in Iowa and another in the South, and claim they have successfully developed a message that will play in both places. The Gephardt rationale, in fact, is that his is the only "national" campaign, while Gore's is confined to the South, Simon's is based solely in Iowa, Jackson's is mainly black, and Dukakis's is strong only in the Northeast. By implication, Babbitt's campaign is based nowhere, and that is indeed the growing conventional wisdom.

GEPHARDT IS NOT the only one who is changing his message to toughen up his image. Dukakis is doing so, and so is Mario Cuomo, who is making new noises about getting into the presidential race if Dukakis fails.

Twice lately, Dukakis has begun speeches by declaring "I am an internationalist. I believe that we must be tough and strong and involved—in our relations with the Soviet Union, in Europe, in our own hemisphere," and elsewhere in the world. In one speech, at Georgetown University in Washington on September 25, he went on to pledge four additional times to be "tough" and seven more times to be "strong."

Dukakis, too, is paying lip service to the Bradley formula on the Soviet Union, promising to test Gorbachev's sincerity, but "if negotiations fail, to build a conventional military capability that is tough and strong and versatile and equal to the task of defending Europe."

But the rest of Dukakis's message remains pure Massachusetts—eager in the extreme "to stop and reverse the arms race" by banning missile flight tests and underground nuclear tests. Dukakis is opposed to the Midgetman, wants to end support for Jonas Savimbi in Angola, and favors "a boycott of South Africa and constructive engagement with Nicaragua." In Miami, when Gephardt stumbled into saying that he might favor giving military aid to black rebels in South Africa (on the theory they are as deserving as Afghan rebels fighting the Soviets), Dukakis said he wouldn't rule it out either. Even Jesse Jackson, who identifies closely with most of the world's left-wing national liberation movements, had the cool to say this would be a "last resort." Dukakis remains deeply critical of the "South Korean military," even though outgoing President Chun Doo Hwan is in the process of establishing a democracy. And he wants to be "very, very tough" on Pakistan to get it to stop building nuclear weapons. Some of these departures from existing U.S. policy might be beneficial if undertaken carefully. In combination, they amount to an unsettling binge of geopolitical moralism reminiscent of Jimmy Carter.

The same moralism envelopes the campaign of Paul Simon, whose outlook resembles that of George McGovern. "If Gorbachev had been an exchange student at Eureka College," Simon said in the Iowa debate, "and Ronald Reagan had studied at the University of Moscow, I believe we'd be living in a different world." Simon said that "massive lack of understanding" is the fundamental problem between the United States and the Soviet Union, as though the difference between Leninism and liberty could be ironed out over a seminar table.

Simon's simple goodness, wildly unrealistic and ripe for ridicule by Republicans though it is, nevertheless has great appeal in Iowa. If Dukakis cannot recover from the perception (visible mainly among Iowa moralists) that his campaign engaged in dirty tricks by tipping the press off to Joseph Biden's plagiarism, Simon could win in Iowa and at least momentarily become the Democratic front-runner. For that matter, Jackson could score a plurality on Super Tuesday on the strength of solid black voting in the South, throwing the Democratic Party into an all-but-terminal left-wing tilt.

IN THE EVENT of impending disaster, there remains the shadow—Mario Cuomo, who hinted to Michael Kramer of *U.S. News and World Report* last week that "if I thought I was needed, I might rethink the question of running." Since he took himself out of the race, Cuomo has been working hard on foreign policy. He said in an interview that he has read every word of Mikhail Gorbachev's that is available in English and has talked to numerous experts including Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, not to mention having visited the Soviet Union.

When he delivered greetings to U.S.-Soviet conferees at Chautauqua last summer, Cuomo was as credulous toward Moscow as Hart was at Philadelphia. He dismissed postwar U.S.-Soviet hostility as "a true absurdity" and declared that "today there appears to be an unprecedented convergence" between the superpowers that he dubbed "a new realism," but which in reality sounded like a new naïveté.

Back from the Soviet Union, Cuomo does sound realistic. "There's no question we need a strong defense," he says. He is not willing to promise to give up SDI for deep cuts in Soviet missilery. "There are a thousand pieces to this puzzle," he says. He would not "announce in advance" of talks whether he would agree to a ban on missile flight tests. "I believe that the INF agreement is no good if that's all there is. . . . You have to convince Sam Nunn that the conventional imbalance is fixed."

Cuomo said that in negotiating with the Soviet Union, "I am going to be tough. I think they are in big trouble" economically and demographically. With him, there will be "no no-first-use pledge. What do I get for it? What does Bruce Babbitt get for it? I think it's dumb." On the Persian Gulf, "I'm not sure that flagging the Kuwaiti ships is the best thing we could have done, but we ought not undo it now." Should the War Powers Act be invoked over the Gulf operation? "I would live with the War Powers Act," he said. "Lincoln lived with habeas corpus. You do what

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you have to do." He seemed to mean that War Powers would be ignorable, if necessary.

If perchance Cuomo should become a candidate, it's clear that he (like several already in the race) wants to be identified as "tough." But is he really, and are they? Cuomo said that he does not know if Reagan's "toughness" got the Soviets to the negotiating table. In Miami, several of the other candidates indicated they did not think that America's Pershing II missiles necessarily produced the INF agreement or that SDI makes it possible to get deep cuts in offensive missiles out of the Soviets. These Democrats may want to sound tough for purposes of presidential politics, but they still haven't learned what Reagan has to teach them about bargaining with enemies.

Washington's worst oppressor of blacks is its black civic leader.

THE IMPERIAL MAYOR

BY JUAN WILLIAMS

HERBERT O. REID SR., legal counsel to the mayor of Washington, D.C., was the first scheduled speaker at a September 25 Congressional Black Caucus hearing on alleged harassment of black politicians by the press and Justice Department. Reid delivered remarks that, at heart, constitute a legal brief in defense of a client—Mayor Marion S. Barry Jr.—whose nine years as mayor of the nation's capital have produced a steady and now roaring cascade of local corruption in Washington.

Eleven Barry administration officials have been indicted and convicted, including two deputy mayors, since Barry was elected in 1978. One of the convicts is former Deputy Mayor Ivanhoe Donaldson, Barry's chief political strategist and long-time colleague from the civil rights movement. Donaldson admitted to pocketing at least $190,000 in city funds. That came after Barry's first wife, Mary Treadwell, went to jail in 1983 for embezzling federal funds while she and Barry ran a youth training program. Barry, her husband and business partner at the time, said he knew nothing about her illegal activities. But once she got out of jail, Barry, in a show of political bravado, quickly rewarded her with a job on the D.C. Parole Board. A year after Treadwell was convicted, a woman with whom Barry had a "personal relationship" went to jail for dealing cocaine and refusing to tell a grand jury if she sold any to Barry. Since then the same woman, Karen Johnson, when she was called before a grand jury probing kickbacks and bribery, is reported to have admitted that contractors with ties to Barry paid her $25,000 to keep her mouth shut. Having been jailed once for refusing to answer, she reportedly told this grand jury that she sold cocaine to Barry "20 to 30 times." All of this occurred while Barry's current wife was getting $1,150 worth of clothes from a lawyer who lobbies the city government, and allegedly using $1,500 in city funds to pay for a fur coat.

The mayor himself made the front pages in stories detailing everything from scandals to corruption. He had to be chased away from the apartment of an attractive model he had been harassing. Federal prosecutors are investigating how a city contractor got $41,000 in contracts after allegedly sweeping the mayor's home and telling him it was supposedly under FBI surveillance. Lately, the imperial mayor has told reporters, "Don't bug me," in response to questions about $57,000 in undocumented expenses from his travel and entertainment funds. He has also shoved aside questions about destroyed records for another $41,000 he took from the city's ceremonial fund. "I don't think the public elected me to go out and keep hotel receipts."

Barry came to power in Washington in the early 1970s, at the same time the city won the right to have an elected government. He had been active in the civil rights movement as the first chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and after coming to Washington to raise funds for the group he became involved in local bus strikes, youth training programs, and peripherally in the riots. Those efforts thrust the dashiki-clad, gun-toting Barry into prominence as a self-promoted local black leader. When elected politics came to Washington he began a steady climb from the school board to the city council. In the city's second mayoral election in 1978, Barry's two older and more established black opponents split the black vote while whites, infatuated with his dashing image as a civil rights revolutionary intent on making the city government work for the people, gave their vote to Barry, enabling him to win the mayor's seat.

Barry has been something of a Teflon mayor. Charges of indiscretion, arrogance, and mismanagement have been slow to stick because most people were rooting for him. There is still the feeling that local government is young and fragile (home rule is little more than a decade old) and that a black mayor is an important symbol in a city that is 70 percent black and disproportionately poor.

Juan Williams is a writer for the *Washington Post Magazine*.

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Since his election Barry has run a sleazy administration for which there is no excuse. But his lawyer, Herbert Reid, a distinguished professor of constitutional law at Howard University, has found rationalizations for Barry's sorry performance that have so far proved popular with audiences ranging from the Congressional Black Caucus to a majority of the black citizens in Washington. Reid argues that the mayor, as an individual responsible for trashing the city's good name and its highest office, as well as allowing the city treasury to be ripped off, is not important. What does matter, he said, is the importance of Barry as a black mayor.

Reid argues that in the post-Reconstruction era whites "used the indiscretions and excesses of blacks to successfully disenfranchise blacks and take them out of office." And in 1987, Reid argues, a black mayor in the Nation's Capital must be protected—no matter what—because as a man with political and economic power, he represents the next phase of the civil rights movement. Black people can't afford to have Barry forced out of office by the many charges of corruption, drug use, and other acts of indefensible behavior, Reid told the Black Caucus, because it could mean a repeat of the post-Reconstruction era and a return to whites governing the city. To all the mayor's critics Reid and Barry are saying it is a choice of supporting the man or running the risk of being labeled a traitor to the cause of black racial progress.

THERE ARE FEW other arguments left with which to defend the mayor. No one even suggests that there has been much improvement in city services or the quality of life for the people most dependent on the city government, the poor. Middle-class blacks continue to flee the city. In moments of bravado, city officials point to downtown construction to show what a good job the mayor has done. But this is a weak argument that overlooks the fact that the city is home to the real estate hungry federal government and that a downtown building boom was long due after the fallow period following the riots and the flight of white businesses to the suburbs. When all else fails, supporters resort to pointing out that Barry has not been indicted yet and that there are corrupt white mayors who have ruled American cities.

To some extent the apologists for Barry have succeeded. He is still getting support from 44 percent of the city's residents, although two-thirds of those same residents, according to a *Washington Post* poll, believe corruption is a major problem in the city government. That 44 percent comes at a high price. To argue that the fate of the black race, the fate of the modern civil rights movement, and the fate of black control of the city government rests on deaf, dumb, and blind support for one politician—Marion Barry—is a big, dangerous political con job that threatens to set back the growth of black political strength in the city. Because the city is Washington, D.C., it also threatens the good name of black political leadership nationally. Holding on to office by selling out to racist instincts and fear does harm to the city by exacerbating black-white racial divisions. Barry is handing white racists who don't want blacks elected to any post ammunition with which to attack black politicians as corrupt and incompetent. And the Barry administration is allowing the real issues of city life—such as housing the poor and reducing infant mortality—to be ignored while it focuses on the now all-out battle to save Barry from drowning in a fetid sea of rising corruption. The message from Reid and Barry to the city is: "Drop Dead."

UNTIL NOW Barry has blamed whites for his problems. The archvillain is the white, Republican U.S. Attorney Joseph DiGenova, who, according to Barry, has been trying to "run me out of office." The supporting cast of bad guys is led by the white press whenever it dares to chronicle the corruption, the mismanagement, and the arrogance. It is "disrespectful [for reporters] to even suggest that the mayor should not" accept a $1,500 suite for free from a local hotel, said Barry. He didn't mention if it was proper to ask about the $965.21 bill for food and drinks that he left the hotel without paying.

Barry's strategy of blaming whites has recently been extended to blaming black people—70 percent of city residents. He even has blamed the job of mayor for his troubles, announcing at the start of the year that the job was too time consuming and he would take a week or two off every month. Faced with a public housing department that during his administration has returned to the federal government several million unspent dollars intended for improving the public housing stock—even as the waiting list for public housing grows—Barry blamed a homeless black woman for having too many children. He had a good point about the woman's lack of personal responsibility, but in that situation he surrendered any moral authority as a black leader by using the woman's plight as a convenient excuse for himself.

Barry doesn't limit his targets to poor blacks; middle-class blacks get shot at as well. Even with a windfall revenue surplus as a result of changes in the federal tax laws this year, Barry proposed a budget that would raise taxes on the city's largely black middle class. The tax hike, had it been approved, would have allowed Barry to keep the revenue surplus and continue charging higher taxes in the future. The black middle class would pay so he could continue to expand his patronage empire and not make necessary decisions to improve his poor management of the fat city budget.

The new strategy of blaming blacks even extends to his own staff. At the start of this third term he fired several aides and blamed them for the problems his administration had with mismanagement in the first two terms. But in the third term there were more aides to be blamed. He blamed them for not clearing the snow from city streets (a repeated problem during his administration) and forcing him to come back to face the controversy from sunny California, where he had been attending the Super Bowl. He even blamed the snow; he said Washington doesn't usually get much snow so he shouldn't be held responsible for not

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clearing the streets. He has blamed one aide after another for not properly managing the city's jails. The jail crisis, a running sideshow throughout his administration, threatens to enter the main tent any moment since prisoners charged with serious crimes are being released to keep the city in compliance with court orders against overcrowding. He blames his aides for an ambulance service that arrives in casual fashion on the scene of heart attacks and car accidents. He blames his aides for the on-going corruption in his administration, pointing to those going off to jail and accusing them of having "let me down."

At the same time Barry says the corruption is not widespread in the city government but the work of just a few "bad apples." As contrary evidence in the form of more tales of corruption keeps popping up, Barry has decided that the problem is his image. He blamed his long-time press secretary, Annette Samuels, for the stain on his reputation and got rid of her. He also has hired three public relations aides, at city expense, to try to change his image.

Barry has extended the blame for this trouble to U.S. District Court Chief Judge Aubrey E. Robinson Jr., a black man. When Reid filed suit for Barry charging the U.S. Attorney's Office with leaking grand jury information and misusing the subpoena process, Robinson rejected the complaint as unfounded. Reid responded that Robinson was covering his own failure to oversee properly the U.S. Attorney's activities and was rejecting the suit only because the "conduct about which we complained has occurred during his [Robinson's] watch."

THE PEAK OF Barry's finger-pointing came when the mayor, in blue velvet jogging suit and cap with the word "MAYOR" emblazoned on it, was delivered by limousine to the house of a young model who repeatedly asked him to leave her alone. Her landlady finally threw him out. In explaining this episode, Barry, through lawyer Reid, said that the one to blame was the model's three-year-old son. The boy had wanted to meet the mayor, and straight arrow that he is, Barry had gone to the woman's apartment to make the little boy's dream come true.

Barry's strategy of blaming everyone for his failures has apparently impressed his wife. Effi Barry told a TV station she blames Karen Johnson for not leaving town "for the sake of her dignity" after spending time in jail for not talking to the grand jury about charges that she sold cocaine to the mayor. Mrs. Barry also blames the city lobbyist who gave her free run of an expensive clothing boutique in Georgetown to buy a leather jacket ($487), leather pants ($362), and blouse ($162) and boots ($77) that with taxes came to $1,150. It was his mistake, she said, for offering this birthday shopping spree without telling her he did business with the city. When news broke that money from the city's treasury may have been used to pay for her fur coat, Mrs. Barry blamed the bookkeeper.

The scope of Barry's abysmal performance as mayor of the District of Columbia is an insult to all who struggled for the right to have an elected government and mayor for a city once ruled like a plantation by Congress. It is immediately damaging to the city's effort to gain statehood. "At this point it is more than just an image problem," said Democratic Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, chairman of the D.C. Appropriations subcommittee, which has kept its oversight of city affairs to a minimum out of respect for the right of self-government. "What's happening in the city is having an impact up here. I think there will be a closer look at [city] appropriations in the future." In other words, even a friendly Democrat is being forced into the undesirable role of policing the city government because of the excess of the Barry administration. Barry is making the city pay for his sins by surrendering its right to govern itself.

He is also making the city a butt of jokes for the opposition. Republican Senator John Danforth, an opponent of statehood for the city, told the *Washington Post*, "Some governments are corrupt but are known for their competency in running the city. Others are incompetent but considered 'clean.' This government is scandalously corrupt and hopelessly incompetent." Again the city's residents and particularly its black residents pay the price for linking arms in defense of a scandalous administration. In similar fashion Barry has damaged the image of minority contracting, a thoroughly worthwhile and important effort to include black businesses among the firms getting city contracts. Under Barry the words "minority contracting" have become synonymous with corruption. City contracting, and specifically payoffs for multimillion-dollar contracts, is the focus of the 20-month investigation by the U.S. Attorney into the Barry administration.

WITH THE HELP of the distinguished Reid, Barry has managed to fast-talk his victims—the citizens of D.C.—into believing that he is their best hope. In fact, Washingtonians would do better to get behind a movement to oust the mayor and begin looking for better leaders. Young black political talent in the city has been inhibited by Barry's ability to tar any opponent as a foil for white interests who want to reclaim political control of the city. Now is the time for that young, different leadership to slip the burden of Barry's race-baiting and put the pressure on him to resign in the best interests of black people and the city. Washington deserves quality black political leadership, like Richard Arrington in Birmingham or Andrew Young in Atlanta or Harvey Gantt of Charlotte.

In August Barry failed to make a scheduled appearance on a Washington radio call-in program, WOL's "Kathy Hughes Show." Hughes, who became well-known when she launched a boycott against the *Washington Post* for being insensitive in its coverage of blacks, tried for two hours to find out what happened to the mayor. At the end of the show that Barry never showed up for, Hughes, a supporter of the mayor, began to tell her listeners about the hundreds of black people who followed cult leader Jim Jones's instructions to go to the jungles of Guyana and then drink poison: "You don't follow anyone blindly, my brothers and sisters. . . . We love Marion Barry. He is the mayor. . . . But if Marion Barry disrespects us, we will cry out. . . . We will not blindly drink the Kool-Aid any longer." □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Winter of His Discontent

Glasnost touches the film world with the arrival of *Theme*, a Soviet film made in 1980 and shown in the U.S.S.R. only in 1986. Now that we can see it here, the immediate question is not why it was suppressed under the old Soviet dispensation but how it ever got made. The protagonist is a playwright, 54, greatly successful in his younger years, idolized

Theme
(International Film Exchange)

by many, especially the young, who is now in that time of middle middle-age when he feels sterile and ashamed. His past seems footling, his future empty. This of course is not a new subject, whether the protagonist is an artist, as in Antonioni's *L'Avventura*, or a man (or men) of business, as in numerous Italian and French films—Scola's *We All Loved Each Other So Much*, for instance. But *Theme* puts the subject in an extraordinary context. This Soviet playwright has begun to think bitterly of his former subservience to state approval; and he comes in contact obliquely with a young writer, presumably Jewish, who means to emigrate for freedom of expression.

Near incredibly, this film was permitted to be made. After six years' hibernation, it was liberated, has arrived, is welcome. The screenplay, a collaboration between the director, Gleb Panfilov, and Alexander Chernivsky, tells of a visit to a small provincial town by the playwright, Kim Yesenin, with his friend and former war comrade, a novelist named Igor, and Kim's blond companion, Svetlana. (She very soon returns to Moscow, where they all live, when developments show her that she is in the way.)

They are to stay with an elderly woman friend of Igor's, but when they arrive at the house, Kim lets the others out and, restless, goes for a drive. He stumbles on a small museum that has an exhibit about a local poet. Inside he sees a lovely woman in her 30s guiding a group of French tourists. Kim, typically of the menopausal male, is sexually avid, especially because his name apparently has an aphrodisiac effect on women, and is interested.

He makes no move, but that night, the woman, Sasha, appears at their hostess's home for dinner. In the course of the evening, she delivers, with gentleness, some home truths to Kim about himself. He says he is glad to hear the truth, but we know the temper of that gladness. Next day, after a note from Sasha, he meets her in a graveyard, expecting that this is the prelude to an affair. It is not: she only wanted to show him the grave of the local poet and some epitaphs he had written. She leaves him suddenly. He learns her address, goes to her apartment, finds the door open, and is snooping around when she returns with a man. Those two halt in the doorway, while Kim skulks behind the refrigerator in the kitchen.

A long, hot, love-hate scene follows between the pair in the doorway, during which Kim is filled with curiosity and the fear of discovery. The man is leaving the country—apparently for Israel—and implores Sasha to leave with him. She refuses; he tears himself away; she faints. Kim comes out of the kitchen, steps over her—a sourly funny moment—and escapes unseen. He gets in his car, intending to drive straight back to Moscow. He changes his mind; and a few other events conclude the film.

I've detailed the story because there's so little to it. But the simple structure is thoroughly enriched with character portrayal, with reflection. Throughout, we're given a double awareness: we see and hear what everyone in the scene sees and hears, and we also hear Kim's thoughts, on the sound track. Thus, while flattery and non-flattery are winged at him, we hear him in his invisible tower commenting on his isolation and wry despair. The six or seven major scenes are handled in theater-film style. That is, although Panfilov uses varied angles and reverse shots at different distances, the cinematics are minimal: the scenes are conceived like scenes in a play, meant to develop the drama by what is said. Because of the material, the actors, and Panfilov's delicacy, the film is never static. It grips.

Delicacy is not common in modern Soviet directing, but from the first sequence Panfilov shows it. His style is light but firm, refreshing in its spareness. In that sequence a car is traveling along a lonely road through a flat, snowy landscape. Inside are Kim and Igor and Svetlana. The two men squabble about the music on the radio. In a very long shot, we see the car stop; one man gets out and starts to walk away, the other man follows and persuades him to return to the car. All the while we hear their voices up close. The contrast between the immensity of the beautiful, stark landscape and the tiny, bickering figures is comic; but the shot also comments on the hugeness of Mother Russia, about which they have been talking in the car, and her almost cruel patience with her children.

Panfilov's chief stylistic predilections are long shots of that kind and scenes set

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hamburger Hill. Purpose: to drench us with the sensations of this pointless, bloody Vietnam battle and, possibly, to make us feel responsible. Despite some pulpy spots, it succeeds. (Reviewed 9/14&21/87)

Stakeout. Chuckles and chills in this comedy-drama about a detective assigned to watch a lovely young woman's apartment. Richard Dreyfuss funny and feisty as the detective, Aidan Quinn icily mad as the menace. (8/31/87)

The Whistle Blower. Intelligently written, well-acted drama about the underworld of British Intelligence. Michael Caine is moving as a father whose son is victimized. (8/10&17/87)

Wish You Were Here. A headstrong English girl, her teenage high spirits and troubles. A seaside town, 1951. Emily Lloyd's breezy performance triumphs over a pat ending. (8/3/87)

SK

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in enclosed spaces, viewed through archways and doorways. The passionate love scene and quarrel between Sasha and her lover is seen for the most part as Kim would have seen it, spying from the kitchen—a narrow corridor of light in the dark apartment at the end of which two people are locked in one of the most important encounters of their lives. The composition seems to exert pressure on what is happening within it. And in the exterior shots, with Leonid Kalashnikov's camera, Panfilov conveys what is both awesome and lovely about the Russian winter.

The two leading actors are excellent. Sasha is played by Inna Churikova, who is Panfilov's wife and has made six films with him. She suggests a tulip—a long neck with a round head. Her face, not conventionally pretty, is open yet dignified. We're told that she is a big Soviet star, which is easy to believe. We're told the same about Mikhail Ulyanov, the Kim, and it's equally easy to believe. He looks like a craggier Richard Burton, and he has Burton's ability to speak with silence and with his voice—his voice itself, as distinct from the words he is uttering. A young traffic policeman, who is used politely as a comic foil, is well done by Sergei Nikonenko. Stanislav Lyubshin gives fire and pain to the émigré lover.

The ending of the film is a mirror of the protagonist's dilemma. It is the ending that Kim might have written for one of his plays, trying to tie up neatly the complications of some lives. Panfilov doesn't retract the playwright's discontents, but there is a small hint that light may be flickering at the end of the tunnel—a theme that may salvage Kim's writing and his state of mind. But the very neatness of the ending implies an irony, and, in view of that irony, we may doubt that the light will flourish.

Still, *Theme* is an exceptional film, subtle and resonant. This is, I think, Panfilov's first film to be shown here. Born in 1934, he was first trained as a chemical engineer, then went to the Moscow Film School. He has been making feature films since 1968—a total of seven, including three since *Theme*. More Panfilov, please.

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ARCHITECTURE

THE TEMPLE OF MARKETING

HELMUT JAHN'S new United Airlines Terminal at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport is a terminal in more ways than one. United has christened its gleaming half-billion dollar facility "the Terminal for Tomorrow." But what Jahn has given us is an architectural echo of yesterday, a deliberate evocation of the soaring iron and glass pavilions of the great Victorian railway stations. From the vantage point of the world's busiest airport, one fin de siècle looks back with longing at another, recasting our lapsed faith in technological progress as a nostalgic dream. It's time for the 20th century to fasten its seat belts, as Tomorrow descends for a final approach.

Management has not yet installed the royal palm trees shown in Jahn's scale models, but you don't need the palms to make out the ghost of Joseph Paxton, the Victorian greenhouse designer whose 1851 Crystal Palace first elevated prefabricated metal and glass construction to the scale of civic architecture. Like the Palace, Jahn's terminal and its companion "satellite" building are axial structures (each 1,500 feet long to Paxton's 1,800), metal-framed, glass-paneled, capped with soaring barrel vaults, drenched throughout with natural light. And, like Paxton, Jahn has stocked his greenhouse with the fruits of Industry ("The luggage laser scans 480 bags a minute . . .") and Empire (an "international cuisine" of teriyaki, enchiladas, and couscous replaces the standard shrink-wrapped sandwich).

Yet Jahn's high-tech update of 19th-century engineering is a far cry from such explicitly historicist buildings as John Burgee and Philip Johnson's headquarters for AT&T in New York or Robert A. M. Stern's cheap editions of Gilded Age opulence. Jahn has issued no polemical statement against the functionalist aesthetic of Modernism, nor renounced the ideal of social progress that aesthetic once expressed. His oxymoronic treatment of the future-as-past

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reflects a more complex state of perplexity. His problem is how modernity can be visually represented at a time when the correlation between the aesthetic and the ideal has collapsed.

The railway pavilion to which Jahn's design pays tribute is one of the most symbolically loaded images in architectural history. Modern architecture began, in effect, with the 20th century's retrospective view that the iron and glass shed covering the tracks and platforms at the station's rear, a purely utilitarian structure, possessed an expressive power far greater than the ornamented masonry capital-A Architecture of the station's facade. To the early Modernists, this split between the station's front and rear epitomized the crisis they sought to resolve: the Victorian architect's stubborn clinging to the authority of history and tradition, his inability to conceive of architecture as other than an eclectic reworking of the historical styles, blinded him to the potential of new structural materials and methods to express the legitimate authority of the industrial age.

The equation between industrial technology and social progress long preceded its architectural articulation by the Bauhaus masters. In the 18th century, theorists such as Turgot and Condorcet idealized industry as a system governed by rational methods, and therefore as a paradigm for social organization, a vehicle of scientific application destined to deliver society from the despotic rule of church and state into the realm of reason. By the end of the 19th century, the architectural vocabulary to communicate this sociological message had been in place for some time. All the Modern architect had to do was reveal it: strip away "the styles" from the front of the station and allow the building's structure to announce its own expressive power. By then, of course, industrial production had progressed far beyond the Enlightenment's utopian paradigm for organizing the future; its managers had already displaced the traditional figureheads as administrators of social authority. For the architect to give this authority visual expression was to allow society to recognize the truth of its own life through the medium of its buildings.

But this solution to the crisis of 19th-century architecture was acceptable only so long as technology retained the progressive connotation the Enlightenment had accorded it. The crisis of contemporary architecture is that this connotation has been untenable for some time. "Architecture or Revolution," Le Corbusier sang out in 1923 to promote his machines for living; "Revolution can be avoided." But before a half century had passed, the Modern style had become the official face of the imperial corporation, an authority governed not by reason but by greed, wielding power as despotically as any king or pope. The proliferation of the Modern "glass box" in the 1960s and '70s helped to provoke a rupture with the very faith in technological progress that the buildings had been designed to reinforce.

UNITED AIRLINES TERMINAL, O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The airport is a stage on which the breakdown of this faith is re-enacted repeatedly in the glare of TV cameras. In the Modern vision of Tomorrow depicted by such architects as Le Corbusier, Ivan Leonidov, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Buckminster Fuller, airplanes, airships, and airborne housing figured as sacred images; they were totems of technology's power to free us from the weight of earthbound tradition and dogma. At Kennedy Airport's Terminal City, with individual buildings by star second-generation Modernists such as I. M. Pei, Earo Saarinen, and Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, air travel provided the pretext to conceive a theme park on the theme of progress, a magnificent showcase of our technological capacity to defy gravity, to shrink the globe, to provide each of us with a ticket to the blue skies of upward mobility. The world to which that ticket actually admits us, however, is a dystopia of chaos, discomfort, and fear, a full-scale demonstration of technology's power to afflict us with loss of time, temper, life, limb, sanity, and Samsonite, the migraine world of the near-miss and the terrorist attack.

The course of Helmut Jahn's development as an architect recapitulates the breakdown of the Modern faith. Like the Victorian railway station, Jahn's work is split into two apparently contradictory parts, though arranged in a sequence that reverses the logic of the Modern breakthrough. In 1966, while still a student, Jahn emigrated from Germany to Chicago on account of his admiration for Mies van der Rohe, then at the peak of his prestige as the father of the modern office tower. Jahn's earliest buildings proclaimed his fealty to the great master of structural expression, and earned him a privileged place in the "Second Chicago School" that had sprung up around Mies during his tenure as director of architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

But by the late 1970s, Jahn had already begun to turn the example of the master on its head. Instead of devoting himself to the gradual refinement of a limited vocabulary of structural form, Jahn swiftly transformed himself into the prototype of the "designer architect," a brilliant packager valued by real estate developers for his talent to endow each commission with a unique, spectacular profile. Throughout the 1980s,

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with projects as stylistically diverse as Television City, Bank of the Southwest Tower, and the State of Illinois Center, Jahn has dedicated his career to disproving the Miesian dictum that "it is not necessary nor possible to invent a new kind of architecture every Monday morning."

TO JUDGE from Jahn's development sketches, which are included in the monograph on his work published last year by Rizzoli, he finds it both possible and necessary to design a series of often radically different alternatives for each commission he receives. It is this gift for formal invention, coupled with the sartorial flair that landed him on the cover of *GQ* a few seasons back, that has brought Jahn the considerable celebrity he enjoys outside the architectural profession. Many architects less favored by the media are inclined to disparage Jahn as an architect whose flashy, one-of-a-kind creations are designed less to serve the needs of their users than to feed the media's insatiable appetite for novelty: What will Helmut design next?

Jahn is hardly the only architect, hardly even the only erstwhile Miesian, to abandon the strictures of canonical Modernism. Architects have been laboring now for two decades in the void left by the erosion of the industrial paradigm. What distinguishes Jahn from the postmodern historicists, and also from such committed Modernists as Norman Foster and Richard Meier, is that his work has moved progressively toward the embodiment of a new paradigm.

What Jahn understands better than any architect of his generation is that the cultural authority of industrial production has been supplanted by the authority of marketing. His work represents a recognition that this development holds aesthetic as well as socioeconomic implications. "You have to accept the fact," Jahn says,

> that when people hire you to do new and different things, you can't go around defending one kind of thing and develop a philosophy around it. If I had a philosophy, all the buildings would be the same. The only way to succeed in this area is to satisfy people who want something fresh and flamboyant for marketing.

This may not exactly qualify as a philosophy, but it is certainly a prevailing cultural attitude. The enthusiasm with which Jahn embraces this attitude not only stands behind his professional success, it also lends even his flimsiest works a horrifying fascination.

The fascination of the new terminal at O'Hare lies in how successfully it simulates an architecture that did arise from profound philosophical conviction. This time out Jahn has literally buried his customary flamboyance. Only in the underground concourse connecting the main building to the "satellite" terminal does the trademark flash fully erupt, in a style one might call Perpendicular Disco: rainbow neon pulsating to piped-in "space music," mock fan-vaulting in translucent plastic. Above ground, Jahn plays it straight in a sleek monochrome display of structural muscle. It's a very handsome display. United's employees are said to hate the new terminal (largely because they resent its cost), but passengers have reason to be grateful for the abundant natural light, the no-wait "flow through" ticket counters, the efficient organization of passenger circulation.

What is significant about the terminal, however, is not how effectively it mimics the rational principles of Modern design, but how thoroughly it subverts them. Modernists acclaimed the old railway terminals because, unlike the historical romance embodied in the facade, the shed spoke honestly of the cold facts of the industrial age. Jahn, by contrast, has selected this image precisely because it is fiction. "We wanted it to have a certain romance, a certain feeling of fantasy that you associate with travel." To impart a feeling like that to those who are actually traveling does indeed require fantasy in quite a heavy dose. What Jahn has accomplished toward that end is an architectural equivalent of a TV spot for the Friendly Skies. As we step onto the people mover and glide down the concourse, lifting our eyes to gaze at the postcard-perfect clouds through the glazed barrel vault, we can forget about hijackings, microwaved sirloin tips, and holes in the ozone layer.

The paradox is that Jahn's architectural fictions give us a factual representation of values in the post-industrial age of the service economy. In this sense, at least, Jahn is a true heir of the Mies who once defined architecture as "the will of an epoch translated into space." When Jahn insists that we "have to accept the fact" of marketing, we hear an echo of Mies defending the technological paradigm in 1930: "The new era is a fact: it exists, irrespective of our 'yes' or 'no.'"

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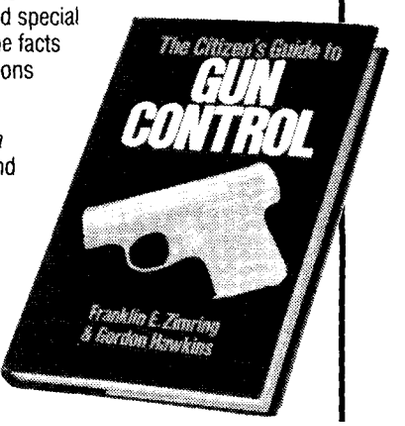

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In 1987 the culture of consumer marketing is also a fact, however justifiably we may protest its promiscuous blurring of image and substance.

But must we say "yes" to marketing? Must we surrender technology's heroic march of progress to marketing's dog-eat-dog pursuit of novelty? It does seem like an enormous letdown. Still, before we get too indignant, it is worth remembering that we've heard this kind of grumbling once before: not everyone thought technology was something to build temples to, either. True, probably nobody outside the advertising industry would equate marketing with social progress. But perhaps one of Modernism's most important lessons is that it doesn't pay to place too much faith in the zeitgeist.

HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Herbert Muschamp directs the graduate program in criticism at Parsons School of Design.

READING AND BELIEVING

The Literary Guide to the Bible
edited by Robert Alter and Frank Kermode

(Harvard University Press, 678 pp., $29.95)

Some years ago I was contending that our sense of 18th-century English society and culture will continue to be askew so long as we habitually hedge off from that century's poetry the great Protestant hymns by such writers as Charles Wesley or Isaac Watts. A scholarly friend, however, made me think twice about this. He agreed that "Love Divine, all loves excelling" and "When I survey the wondrous cross" hold their own, on sheerly literary merit, with all but the greatest secular poems of their time. But he went on to wonder whether much would not be lost, and little gained, by moving these lovely verses out of the mouths and memories of unsophisticated and perhaps infrequent worshipers, into the more arid air of the lecture hall and the academic conference. His question was a good one, with far-reaching implications.

My friend, however, was Frank Kermode, who now appears as co-editor of this handsome and wonderfully instructive *Literary Guide to the Bible*. Has he changed his mind, or contrived at least to quell his earlier disquiets? For if there is a case for excluding great congregational hymns from literary study, surely there is a stronger case for thus excluding the great source book behind those hymns, what Watts and Wesley would have called Holy Writ. Only one of this volume's 25 contributors considers that case, which is the sort of objection that might be raised to the enterprise as a whole.

Fifty years ago there stood on my schoolboy's bookshelf a book called *The Bible Designed To Be Read As Literature*. Neither I nor either of my moderately devout parents saw anything wrong with that. It was years later that I learned how a distinguished man of letters, who was also a fervent Anglican, had condemned this publication because it could not help but undermine Christian faith. Without sharing his fervor, or indeed his faith, we can envisage and respect the argument he might use. Any composition in language (he might argue) can be regarded as literature; and some of us by long habit have become so literary that we cannot read a cereal box or a bureaucrat's memo without looking for what of course isn't there: memorable or suggestive vocabulary, crisp or haunting rhythms. In doing so, we misread. We look for a message that isn't there and probably miss the one that is.

Some literary critics have quite consciously applied literary standards to texts that patently were composed with none in mind. Pop Art is an obvious example of the enterprise: the label on a soup can, obviously not coded as Art, can be decoded as Art as soon as a frame is put around it. The result, in literature or in painting, is often curious and entertaining, but it is not often serious. Plainly, a pugnacious and energetic thinker might argue that when we read the Bible as literature, we are being either frivolous or foolish, that we are decoding as literature what was never coded as literature, thus getting a wrong message and missing the right one. A fundamentalist Christian—or a devout Jew, I suppose—would be obliged to take this view. And he might add, perhaps with a snarl, that one can readily envisage a time when the capacities for religious apprehension and religious faith have decayed so generally that to read the Bible as literature will be the only way to get any message from it whatever. (In that case, oddly enough, the message that emerges will have become the right message, because it will be the only one possible.)

I don't suppose that many of the writers in the *Literary Guide* think we have already reached such an irreligious time, but some of them may. The weaker articles limit themselves to a plodding chronicle of how scholars through the centuries, and especially through recent decades, have treated particular books of the Bible. There are only a few of these, however; generally the standard is commendably high. Moreover, in matters of literary theory the discourse is spankingly up to date. There is talk of narrativity, of canon-formation, canonicity; and when the essay on Acts begins, "Foucault has drawn attention to the political dimensions of literature to an extent unprecedented in previous literary criticism," we know what we are in for. The only school of literary theory that is firmly excluded is deconstructionism, which one of the editors describes (not unfairly) as "one recent sectarian manifestation that radically disavows all unities." Since it's a main thrust of the compendium to reassert the Bible's unity, to show how it is all one book despite the heterogeneity of its components, this embargo on the deconstructionists is understandable.

The eminent British anthropologist Edmund Leach conducts an investigation, as thrilling to read as the best detective story, that argues it is no accident that Jesus' first four disciples were fishermen; that Mark the evangelist or else his unknown editors intended this circumstance to be read not as a record of fact but symbolically. How this might be, and what is symbolized, Leach teases out with wonderfully cogent learning. "The mytho-logic of the apostolic fisherman trope is that the fish in the lake are the souls of men crossing over from this world to the Other as they approach death. . . . Those who are caught in the net are the elect, who

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are saved; those who are not caught are the damned." Fundamentalist Christians must, of course, deny the cogency of this, but Christians of other sorts need not. Leach concludes, however, "that one should read [the Bible] as literature, as a total work of art, much as one listens to choral singing echoing from the vaulted roof of a Gothic cathedral." To this it surely must be objected that the reading of much or most literature is not remotely like listening to choristers in a cathedral.

Earlier Leach had made his point more temperately and persuasively:

> The first 16 books of the Old Testament are arranged as if they formed a more or less continuous history . . . , but the historical framework is a literary device designed to exhibit the unfolding of the plot. At every stage, events are presented as a fulfillment of what has come before and as a foreshadowing of what will come after. This is what happens in a Shakespearean tragedy or in a novel by Tolstoy, but it is not the manner of a serious history book.

But surely Tolstoy's image of Russia under Alexander I in *War and Peace* is "serious," and serious as a "history book" is. Historiography, after all, is a literary genre. As for Shakespeare, the obviously relevant comparison is not with his tragedies, but with the cycle of the history plays, where his *Henry IV* fulfills in many ways "what has come before" in *Richard II*, and foreshadows "what will come after" in *Henry VI*. Are we therefore to discount as "not serious" Shakespeare's account of what led to the Wars of the Roses and to the establishment of the Tudor dynasty? Surely the playgoer who does this is trivializing the spectacle staged before him. Certain written works can be serious both as literature *and* as history. What reader of Gibbon or Parkman ever doubted it? And if this is true of Gibbon's great work, and Parkman's, why should it not be true of much of the Old Testament and of the New, including Mark's Gospel? Though doubtless he doesn't intend it, Leach is trivializing literature and denying that it can ever tell the truth.

GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI on the Epistle to the Hebrews is, if not partisan, certainly tendentious. Though his discourse is so well-mannered and adroit that few Christians will take offense, the thrust of his argument is anti-Christian. Part of his adroitness lies in pretending that the assumptions he argues against—that Jesus spiritualized the rites and sacrifices of the Hebrew Temple, the hierarchy of its priests, and even its physical layout, by internalizing them—are not Christian doctrine as such, but only "19th-century liberal and Protestant assumptions." But René Descartes was not a 19th-century liberal Protestant, though Josipovici draws him into the argument as if he were. That argument, though it starts very properly with abundant reference to specific passages of Scripture, pivots on Mary Douglas's *Natural Symbols*. It is from Douglas that Josipovici adopts his governing metaphorical opposition between "thick" and "thin," as when he says of whoever wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews that "if the author does indeed see Jesus in terms of the Old Testament past, his notion of that past is remarkably *thin*." "Thickness," on the other hand, characterizes the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures, where "different and even contradictory material lies side by side," when "we are not asked to choose, to resolve contradictions."

Josipovici quotes approvingly from Douglas:

> We arise from the purging of old rituals simpler and poorer, as was intended, ritually beggared, but with other losses. There is loss of articulation in the depth of past

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time. . . . Only a narrow range of historical experience is recognized as antecedent to the present state.

Douglas is here contending against the tendency in Protestant sects to distrust all ritual as "mere" or "empty" ritual, and therefore to simplify, to strip to the bone, such rituals as they retain. The point is well taken, though it is hardly new. Josipovici wants to level the charge not just against Protestant sects, but against Protestantism generally, if not indeed against Christianity. In such a matter, one speaks as one finds—that is to say, only the participant in the rite can judge it. And so I may avow that my experience of the rite of Anglican Holy Communion is all but unmanageably "thick"; that the range of historical experience appealed to in the rite is so wide that on no single occasion can I feel I have mastered it.

Of course, in making this avowal I speak as a post-Cartesian man, for whom clarity is better than unclarity. Pre-Cartesian man may have been able to tolerate more unclarity; but my experience has been (and I cannot think I am unrepresentative) that the rite of Holy Communion subjects me to as much unclarity, to as much mystery, as I can bear. Accordingly I am grateful to Cranmer and the other Protestant Reformers for having purged this old rite, so that I am spared even more intellectual exertion and emotional confusion. The civilly hidden message of Josipovici's essay is that, in feeling so, I am settling for a soft option. But it doesn't feel soft to me when I am in the midst of it.

NOBODY, I suppose, will read this volume through from first page to last; only a misguided reader would try. But such a hypothetical simpleton would discover that much that he had dutifully imbibed from earlier articles was spectacularly exploded by the last article of all, Gerald Hammond's "English Translations of the Bible." For Hammond shows, with the pithiness and the verve to be expected of the author of *The Making of the English Bible*, that the King James Bible, which everyone accepts as the greatest work of literature among the English versions, is also, in everything that matters most, the most faithful. It is King James's translators who, following and pushing to their limits the insights of the astonishing pioneer William Tyndale, most often translate by a simple "and" the ubiquitous conjunction *waw* in Old Testament narrative. By contrast, other 16th-century translators, not to speak of our modern committees, introduce "elegant variation," thus suggesting cause and effect where the original does no such thing. The original, instead, continually leaves the question—say, of motivation—open.

Hammond has a luminous page where he takes as an example Exodus 9:7, about Pharaoh's refusal to let the Israelites go despite ominous portents about what will happen to him if he doesn't. Only King James's translators link the episodes of this succinct narrative with no more than the paratactic "and":

> and Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Hammond's comment is brilliantly penetrating:

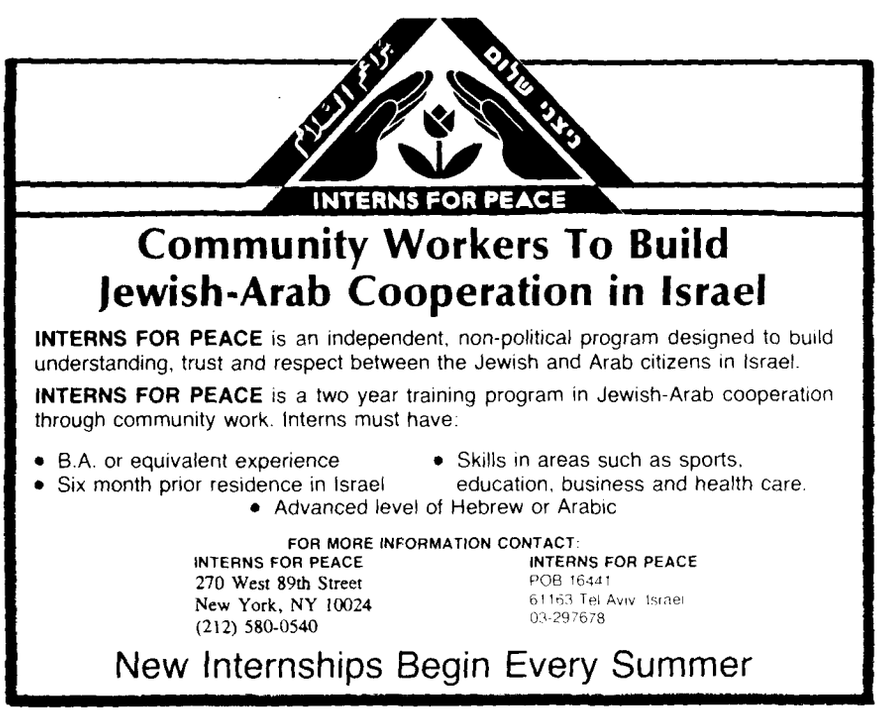
> To have him hardening his heart in spite of the plague, which is the force of Tyndale's "notwithstanding" and the modern versions' "but" and "yet," is to miss the point of the narrative. He hardens his heart because of the plague. A character like Pharaoh responds to power with power, inevitably, and not, as the modern sophisticators of the syntax would have it, irrationally.

A translation, Hammond seems to imply, has the best chance of becoming literature not when it gives itself a wide margin to maneuver around and away from the original, but when it trusts that original implicitly enough to follow it doggedly. This is not what current thinking about translation supposes. And this is not a case for so-called "literal" translation; it applauds translating not word by word, but syntax by syntax.

How is Hammond at odds with other contributors, who insist after all (rather naggingly in fact) that the Bible is to be read not as it was read by the would-be "scientific" disintegrators of the canon, the 19th-century practitioners of the Higher Criticism, but as literature? Well, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And it is notable that, as the notion of "literature" is constrained and intensified into the notion of poetry, the essayists get less and less satisfied with the King James version. An egregious instance is James G. Williams, commenting on the poetry book, Proverbs. He gives his own version of Proverbs 11:12: "Despiser of his neighbor: lacking of mind / and man of discernment: keeps still." And he puts down, as "a comfortable prose amble," the King James version: "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace."

The easiest retort to this is that Williams's version isn't English at all, though it is disconcertingly near to a sort of opaque American deployed at times by Ezra Pound, and more programmatically by Pound's follower, the Hebraically influenced George Oppen. A more searching comment would be that syntax, so crucially important to Hammond, is blithely sacrificed by Williams, apparently as something expected of prose but not of poetry.

One voices one's discomfort by won-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dering if, for most of the essayists, literature hasn't more to do with Edmund Leach's choral voices rebounding from Gothic vaults than with a precisely focused question such as Hammond's: Why "and" rather than "but"? Too often these reiterated appeals to "literature" seem to seek a dimension of the ineffable wherein the questions raised by the Higher Criticism can be allowed to dissolve as self-evidently misconceived. A believer, not necessarily a fundamentalist believer, would be more worried by some of those questions than these essayists are, or want the believer to be.

The one writer who confronts the issue I have been worrying is Robert Alter, the book's other editor and the wittiest of its contributors, who has a splendidly concise and illuminating essay, "The Characteristics of Ancient Hebrew Poetry." Alter writes (not in that piece, but in his "Introduction to the Old Testament"):

> According to one common line of thought, the Hebrew Bible exhibits certain literary embellishments and literary interludes, but those who would present "the Bible as literature" must turn it around to an odd angle from its own original emphases, which are theological, legislative, historiographic, and moral. This opposition between literature and the really serious things collapses the moment we realize that it is the exception in any culture for literary invention to be a purely aesthetic activity.

That last sentence makes precisely the point I found myself making to Leach. And this statement, so temperate and so judicious, might seem to settle the matter in a way we can all accept. But it doesn't, not quite. For "theological" isn't the same as "devotional." Nor does it become so if we add "moral." Through the centuries the Bible has been used pre-eminently as a book of devotion, as it still is by many thousands; and it is *that* use of the book that is most menaced by, and hardest to reconcile with, the use of it as literature.

But I will come clean. I am still insisting that Isaac Watts's and Charles Wesley's hymns be considered by students of 18th-century poetry. And I believe that there *is* a way to read the Bible as at once a book of devotion and a work of literature. That way is hard to find, however, and hard to hold on to. The two different emphases are always in tension below the surface, and sometimes the tension surfaces. Such reading has to be continually vigilant, therefore, and repeatedly self-correcting. My quarrel with this mostly admirable compendium is that in its pages the tension is not sufficiently allowed for, the vigilance is not often enough—indeed, it is hardly ever—demanded.

There is one book of Scripture (now that I have read about it in the *Guide*) that defeats my best attempts at even-handed vigilance. John's Gospel, I am forced to see, is henceforth a text to which I can give either a devotional reading or a literary reading, but certainly not, as Alter hopes for, a reading in which these two perspectives are combined or compounded. Kermode's discussion of John is perhaps the most eloquent and beautiful essay in the book; in my experience it is certainly the most disturbing, not to say distressing. I am not altogether surprised. Kermode has been studying the evangelists for years; in this volume he treats of Matthew as well as John. It is ten years since I heard him lecture on Mark—and found my faith shaken in consequence.

What is so insidious, or lethal, about his treatment of John is that it begins with several pages about the first 18 verses of the Gospel ("In the beginning was the word" and so on, incomparably), pages that profoundly and delicately nourish awed devotion in the reader; and then this awe and trust are sedulously undermined, as Kermode goes on to tease out, still delicately, still patiently, how John *manipulates* his narrative. Manipulate, I fear, is the word. Kermode is much clearer than his collaborators about what he means by "literature," especially narrative literature. It means contrivance.

For Kermode, John the evangelist is a very great, very gifted contriver—alone of the evangelists, a proto-novelist. As we turn the pages, this assimilation of John to somebody like Henry James is ever more marked. We are asked to recognize in his narrative "the subtleties of construction, the more or less occult relationship of parts, that we admire in favored novels." We are asked to note how he supplies a "needed contrast" (where the need is aesthetic), how he has an "economical way" (where the economy is artistic); to see him "preferring to work the allusions into a highly developed parable of the sort he favored." A particular passage of the narrative is called "a construction of much delicacy." We are told of "a storyteller's device," of "a similar narrative refinement." John's placing of the Last Supper before Passover—as the other evangelists don't—"is a brilliant narrative device." And we are to admire him when "he remembers to identify the man with whom Peter conversed in the courtyard as a cousin of Malchus, liking, as many writers do, coincidences that suggest by their very triviality a high degree of plotting."

The cumulative effect of all these ex-

ART SONGS

While in the consulate a smell of onion
And ammonia obtains, over by a weeping tree
In the courtyard, an equestrian statue of Lot
In Civil War attire with pigeon on visor topping it off
So as to make all things ridiculous, convinces
Skeptics even more now that October has inserted
A thin wedge in the year, making it look worn
And slighted, a thing of the past. And you think
It's all untrue, that prophecies were born
A thousand years ago just to intrude on this minute.

Another look is cambric or tulle, the dull stain
Spreading. Lunar business. How far you must live
From your work. How unjust it all is. No shepherds
In this calendar, I see. Only long bad affairs
Busting out into some midnight, somewhere
In the greater tri-state area. All things
Have their end, their finer completion in what
We say, talking to avoid thinking, words that are
Bronze laurels on the forehead of some commander,
Clogged with birdshit. A white trace in time.

JOHN ASHBERY

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pressions is obvious, and Kermode must have intended it: the figure of John the witness (in the religious, not the courtroom, sense) is lost to sight behind the figure of John the fabricator. To be blunt about it, Kermode writes as an unbeliever, to convert us to his unbelief. The great learning and the lucid eloquence, the suave and patient tact, are all harnessed to this end. This is what treating the Bible as literature can come down to.

DONALD DAVIE

Donald Davie's forthcoming collection of poems, *To Scorch or Freeze* (University of Chicago Press), derives from the Psalms of David.

THE MAGUS

Michelet
by Roland Barthes
translated by Richard Howard

(Hill and Wang, 226 pp., $18.95)

Once upon a time, historians and sociologists defined the advent of modernity in terms of rationality, advances in science and technology, the growth of bureaucracy, the triumph of numbers and facts over magic, myth, and superstition. But nowadays, whether we judge by the work of leading literary critics and historians, or by looking at book titles and the programs of annual meetings of learned societies, all that seems to have changed. The focus of attention of the scholarly avant-garde is not so much on apostles of reason and material progress as it is on practitioners of necromancy and the occult, on mythology and the irrational as the harbingers of modernity. Moreover, it is not the triumph of civilization over nature, but the persistent impingement of the natural world, that tends to take center stage.

A reading of the late Roland Barthes's brilliant book, part anthology, part commentary, about the great French historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874) confirms this new sense of the modern. Michelet was the author of a 20-volume history of France as well as twice that many volumes on other subjects, ranging from women in the French Revolution to works on birds, insects, mountains, and the sea. Taking Michelet's complete oeuvre into account, Barthes gives us not so much a portrait of an anti-clerical, radical democrat as of a magus, imbued with Gnostic notions about the conjunction of opposites and intent on erasing the borders between the world of history and the world of nature.

It is this Michelet who is most relevant to Barthes's own preoccupations as a trenchant critic of tradition and convention in language and society. Barthes published his book on Michelet in 1954, under the title *Michelet par Lui-Même*, a title that underrated the importance of his own commentary as well as the power of the anthologist to pursue his own predilections. Since then, a large and impressive literature about Michelet has appeared both in France and the United States; and the definitive edition of his complete works is well under way. But Barthes's pioneering work is indispensable. It is a great boon to have it available in English at last, most ably translated by Richard Howard.

Barthes tells us at the outset that the chief object of his book is not to depict the influence of Michelet's life on his works, but rather to restore coherence to the historian, to recover the structure of his existence, "a thematics, if you like, or better still: an organized network of obsessions." He attempts to show that Michelet's life and work were dominated and bound together by a series of myths, images, and metaphors that had as their aim the abolition of the distinction between the natural and historical worlds. These devices, since they were crucial to Michelet's view of himself as well as of history, deserve to be called existential rather than historical.

No review can possibly do justice to the subtlety and economy of Barthes's presentation in a volume that barely exceeds 200 pages. But one can indicate a few of the themes that emerge from the literary archaeology practiced by Barthes with such fruitful results. Take Michelet's assertion that each people has as its prime nourishment a special kind of food, essential for its survival and constant renewal. For the French, from time immemorial, that food has been bread and soup. The strength of the French was ultimately due to their wheat, growing in the flinty soil that gave sustenance to the blossoming plant. Thus France was literally fed on stone, which gave her, at important moments in history, the spark of life and, so Michelet writes, lent her bones a great power of resistance. Now this is not merely a generalization, right or wrong, about food. It is, rather, an integral part of Michelet's Lamarckian doctrine of transformations: forms melt into one another, in this instance from flint to grain to Frenchmen—from stone to living beings.

Another striking example of transformism occurs in Michelet's use of the animal world in his nomenclature for historical personalities. Robespierre is a cat, Marat a toad, Danton a bull, Sade a bird of prey, Choiseul a lapdog. This is not merely a matter of physical resemblances (which, as the illustrations show, did indeed exist). It is a direct attack by the historian on the classical mode of personal portrayal, based on a detailed description of anatomical parts. Instead, Michelet employs natural epithets that get at those "humors" that constitute the essential character of human beings.

Michelet's own awareness of the power of transformation is apparent in his memorable account of mud baths he took in Italy in 1854: "In my splendid coffin of white marble," he recalls, "I received the first application of the black, unctuous slime, which nonetheless never dirties, being nothing more than sand. Another marble tub, beside it, receives you afterwards, and you are made clean in an instant." But far more than that was involved: no less than an exchange of nature. "I was the Earth, and the Earth was man. She had taken for herself my infirmity, my sin. And I, becoming Earth, had taken her life, her warmth, her youth. Years, labors, pains, all remained in the depths of my marble coffin. I was renewed."

Water, as well as earth, wrought that personal renewal. And water, encompassing both smoothness and homogeneity, always meant something desirable as well as beneficent to Michelet, as against the sterility and the discontinuity of dryness. One of his favorite images, or themes, was the Dutch canal

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boat, which represented for him an ideal site for the family. For Barthes, this image, repeated throughout Michelet's work, reflected his innermost concerns. Barthes describes it thus: "This concave, full object, this egglike, solid space suspended in the smooth elements of the water, constantly exchanging the moisture of ablutions and the liquidity of the atmosphere, is the delicious image of the homogeneous. Here the great Micheletist theme is posited: that of a seamless world." Similarly, Michelet's favorite mammal was the whale, creature of milk and blood, product of the primordial sea, itself an epitome of the instability of matter—smooth, viscous, changeable.

Children, too, contained felicitous mixtures of milk and blood, liquids that flowed within them—so Barthes writes—without ever being engorged, diluted, or dried up. That was not necessarily true of the blood of adults, a key substance in Michelet's historical scheme of things. Blood could go sour, as in the case of Louis XIV, in whom it produced tumors (one on his anus that he managed to keep secret for nine months, fearing, rightly, that all Europe would laugh at it). In blue-blooded aristocracies that had lost their energy and vitality, blood became engorged; and in the two "terrible virgins of modern history," Charles XII and Saint-Just, it turned motionless and inhuman, hard as ice. In kings and queens, whose blood was "sealed" by a closed and static circle of heredity, it became obnoxious and malign.

According to Michelet, benign blood must be in constant motion, must ebb and flow rhythmically. Which is why his principal erotic experience with his second wife, Athénaïs, was to observe and nurse her in the course of her periods: a pleasure, so he believed, far exceeding that of orgasm. For it was only at the moment of her greatest weakness that woman could affirm her magical powers, and was enabled to draw man into that circular, seamless time, superior to the linear time of history, of which he, lacking the natural biological rhythm of the female, could not ordinarily be part.

Woman, for Michelet, was "the gentle mediator between Nature and man." Anticipating a favorite subject of 20th-century historiography (as he anticipated many of its other current preoccupations), Michelet paid tribute to the beneficial medical functions performed by witches. Woman herself was, in the words of Barthes's gloss, "an ultimate medication, she halts time, and, better still, makes it begin again." And this was crucial. For Michelet historic, that is, male, time came to a stop with the French Revolution. It was up to woman to initiate a new time scheme, mandated by her nature and supported by the 19th-century revolution in embryology: natural time.

DOES THIS emphasis on the special role of women imply the permanent separation of the two sexes, with foreseeably tragic results? Not necessarily. Here the powerful Gnostic strain in Michelet's thought comes to the fore. The contradictions and differences between man (idea) and woman (sentiment) can and must be overcome by the ultrasex: the androgynous People, aware that knowledge can discover its object only by means of feeling. The People made the French Revolution—though not the Terror, which was the work of dry and cerebral Jacobins. It is the People that is in possession of the ideal combination of wisdom and instinct, that union of the two sexes of the mind, which Michelet called the source of all that was good and which, so he declared, made him a complete man.

Michelet paid an extraordinary—what to our ears may sound like an extravagant—tribute to the People as the initiator of written history. He believed that 19th-century historians, male, cerebral, barren, were unable to find truth. It was the thought of the People, the national legend, that formed the sole true basis for historical credibility. Only the People could dictate true history to the historian. The best historian was the one who had emerged from the People and was thus closest to it. And "people" was not a class-based concept or group. It excluded priests, lawyers, and intellectuals (as opposed to philosophers). On the other hand, it could include wealthy bourgeois.

Like Woman, the People is above history. It "opens Nature." For Michelet, in search of a seamless world, the People is a unique entity that is capable of overcoming contradictions. It includes poets and philosophers, sages and children, the religious and the rational, activists and contemplatives. Yet Michelet's relationship to the People, so greatly loved and

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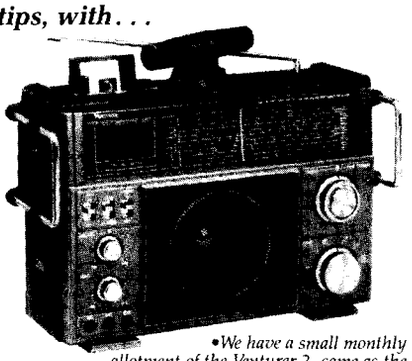

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admired by him, contained a tragic irony. For he himself, born the son of a printer, ever conscious of his family background, was in the end unable, as he put it, to make the people speak: "The people's language . . . was inaccessible to me." Barthes, himself a pioneer in the analysis of language and its meaning, makes an appropriate comment: "Thus, it is Michelet's entire speech—i.e., his entire work—which bears him, lacerated, far from his paradise: he is perhaps the first author of modernity able to utter only an impossible language."

Barthes succeeds admirably in his declared aim of demonstrating that a "total" reading of Michelet's multifarious writings requires an understanding of the network of themes that both underlies and ties them all together. Still, as a historian, I should like to raise a caution. In a letter to Taine, written around 1855, Michelet squarely rejects the name of "poet" with which his correspondent had saddled him and cites various examples of his own historical positivism, each connected with the history of finance. Michelet's self-assessment needn't be taken as definitive (certainly that goes against the grain of Barthes's approach), but it is a useful reminder that there are other important historical skills to be found in his work—skills that are, perhaps necessarily, slighted in Barthes's treatment, and that do not require, and may indeed be obscured by, the "total" approach.

Consider Michelet's capacity, rivaled only by Marx, to get at the root of the disjunction between power and ideology, the illusion that to call an institution or a party by a new name will somehow change the concrete reality within a particular historical situation; or the related illusion that a political leader's purely tactical declaration that he has changed his mind can, in the long run, seriously affect that reality. To integrate *that* sort of skill, marvelously displayed in Michelet's *French Revolution*, into his total thematic system, into the doctrine (I am paraphrasing Barthes) that there are no historical facts, that history is a continuity of identities, that Michelet's belief in vegetal historical growth excludes causality, is to do less than justice to it. And, after all, in the Micheletist scheme, Justice, unlike Grace, is invariably a good thing.

JOHN CLIVE

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THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Democratic Education
by Amy Gutmann

(Princeton University Press, 321 pp., $19.95)

Educators and parents brought up in the Great Society may be feeling a little beleaguered. During the past decade federal expenditures for education have been slashed, the staff of the Department of Education has been reduced by 35 percent, and two books thrashing the educational strategies of the '60s have topped the best-seller lists. Old-fashioned egalitarians may begin to feel a little like the victims of an old West ambush—surrounded, outnumbered, and outgunned. To them, Amy Gutmann's book may seem something like the arrival of the cavalry at dusk. Gutmann appears on the horizon with potent philosophical reinforcements, and the powerful reminder that education is not merely a requirement of economic efficiency, or a Platonic training ground for high culture, but the sine qua non of competent citizenship, and thus the necessary condition of the survival of democratic life in America.

Traversing carefully the controversies that are the current territory of educational philosophy—busing, sex education, funding for parochial schools, vouchers, special education, secret research, racial quotas, creationism, cultural standards, adult education, book censorship, the role of television—Gutmann moves cautiously to lift the siege. Her starting point is philosophical: she offers a carefully delimited definition of democratic education as the conscious social reproduction of democratic life itself—the endeavor of a people to recreate itself as a citizenry in its own image. But her aim is also practical: she proposes guidelines that, if they do not "offer solutions to all the problems plaguing our educational institutions," nonetheless suggest an approach "compatible with a commitment to democratic values."

Still, democrats will be disappointed. For the scholastic virtues of Gutmann's balanced and muted approach amount to a plea of nolo contendere with respect to the conservative indictment of egalitarianism. For better or worse, Gutmann simply does not wish to be seen as anybody's cavalry; she arrives with bugles silent and flags furled, and rides right by the central skirmishes, a kind of neutral academic observer of the tumult. Thus she turns the political struggle into a philosophical exercise—one that requires intellectual adjudication and notional compromise, rather than strong argument and cogently advanced political convictions. She prefers to arbitrate among the combatants, with a great deal of on-the-one-hand/on-the-other-hand argumentation; but for the most part this has the consequence of denying the intractability of the contradictions between them. Her unimpeachable sense of fairness often gives the appearance of fence-sitting.

Gutmann's failure to grasp the intractability of the pedagogical conflict is evident from the outset in her formulation of the problem of democratic education. She seeks an answer to the question: "Who would share the authority to influence the way democratic citizens are educated?" Her unequivocally democratic answer is: the citizenry itself. But immediately she acknowledges that although the citizenry may have a right to control education, it does so under certain prior liberal restraints: the principles of non-discrimination and non-repression. In other words, in adjudicating between the demands of pure democrats who claim citizens alone have a right to determine educational policy and pure liberals who claim that abstract, pre-political principles such as tolerance, individual rights, fairness, and justice take priority over democracy, Gutmann opts for indecision. She wishes to honor liberalism *and* democracy. As a result, she evolves a set of responses incapable of defending either democrats or liberals against neo-Platonic conservatives, for whom the education of a few great souls in the name of the eternal virtues must take precedence.

Gutmann's problem is that the democratic right of a people to "reproduce itself socially" and the liberal priority of non-repression and non-discrimination are deeply contradictory. In practice they call for radically different policies. There is something oxymoronic about the very term "democratic education." To repro-

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duce a culture democratically and to educate culturally are contradictory tasks, especially in a society that—as even democrats will acknowledge—is beset by mediocrity. If, as E. D. Hirsch Jr. argues, the culture is less than literate, to reproduce it is to reproduce illiteracy. If the citizenry is less than civically competent, to reproduce it is to reproduce civic incompetence. The ideal of education connotes change, growth, striving for a higher good: transformation, not reproduction.

GUTMANN spends most of her book grappling with the concrete antagonisms engendered by her two abstract principles. This is more than evident in her implicit response to the elitists. Allan Bloom lays down the gauntlet in his charge that America's egalitarian, service-oriented universities have abjured their classical task of higher education and high culture in an awesome latter-day *trahison des clercs* that can be reversed only by a decisive repudiation of the leveling ideals of therapy, egalitarianism, and mass culture. This is a powerful post-Nietzschean assault on the mediocrity of mass democratic society. But Gutmann simply asserts that "democratic principles do not stand in the way of the pursuit of high culture," and that modern universities can be purveyors of cultural standards *and* gatekeepers to the professions.

Take the example of television. To those appalled by the wasteland it has created, Gutmann urges faith in the power of "entertaining edification." She fails to consult the tradition of philosophers, artists, and pedagogues who have worried that cultural education and popular entertainment are addressed to warring parts of the soul, who have despaired of finding an edifying form of popular culture that does not coddle mass prejudice as it tickles mass taste. The lively debates about the differences between a culture of words and a culture of images, about the privatistic character of television watching, about differences among the arts and the media, remain undiscussed. Gutmann simply hopes that entertaining edification will be possible, that "cultural extravaganzas" are not the playthings of The Last Man that elitists fear they are, that universities can somehow be both ivory towers and service institutions.

The same holds true for Gutmann's treatment of sexism and the problem of egalitarian gender relations. Neoconservatives have blamed modern feminism, and especially its assertion of the moral equality of men and women, for the unraveling of America's social fabric, for the erosion of parental authority and the ascendancy of a relativism of values, and for the consequent nihilism of the nation's children. It is an old-fashioned argument, but it is also a potent one; and it cries out for a response from serious democrats. But Gutmann, understandably anxious to do justice to feminism without offending all the women who are mothers, is reduced to the wan claim that to "encourage egalitarian gender relations" does not, should not, and will not, prevent us from "valuing the intimacy of family life." So much for the inherent antagonisms between the ideal of radical individual personhood and the ideal of the traditional family. But the fact remains that in practice our educational choices will be constrained by the actual antagonism of the child understood as a legally independent person whose "rights" the state must protect, and the child understood as one member of a family where the rights are those of parents against the state.

Or, to give a final example of Gutmann's good-willed but indecisive democratic liberalism, consider the crucial constitutional dilemma arising out of the busing controversy: the role of the courts in educational policy. As a democrat, Gutmann is quite properly worried about judicial intervention in the life of self-determining local communities. As a liberal, however, she acknowledges that equal opportunity for minorities mandates busing, even if it has to be imposed on the community by elitist courts. She would prefer the public to see its own way to the busing solution. But it doesn't, and perhaps it can't.

Yet there are the politicians, who may be as enlightened as the judges, and are a more democratic source of authority. Thus Gutmann offers this quasi-democratic solution: "Politicians would do well morally to act as a temporary trustee of the public interest," or of what the public will come to see as its interest (since surveys show that the public is much less critical of busing after the fact than before it). The problem is that the politicians must please their constituents to be elected. So Gutmann concludes with a legitimation of judicial intervention. Having run through a tortuous democratic logic in an effort to save the people from themselves, she ends up back where she started, justifying the very judicial encroachment for which she sought a democratic alternative. In honoring both sides of the debate, she finally accommodates neither. In the end her practical recommendation to leave matters in the hands of the courts must be particularly offensive to the democrats she means to satisfy. However philosophically edifying the exercise may be, politically it is a cop-out.

Thus it goes for all the issues—high culture versus democratic education, excellence versus equality, liberal justice versus democracy, abstract personhood versus family relations—that are the crux of modern ideological conflict over educational policy, and that normally di-

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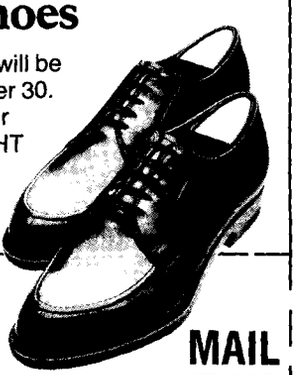

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vide right from left, conservatives from progressives, democrats from liberals. I do not mean to argue that a political theorist ought to enter these lists by abandoning philosophical restraint or conceptual precision. But to guide women and men living here on earth, theory must get its hands a little dirtier than Gutmann wishes to. Perhaps it is possible not to choose sides, but it is not possible to ignore the philosophical and political antinomies from which the sides spring. Too often Gutmann begins with a commendable democratic impulse, only to back off in the name of an intellectual disclaimer, a cautious expression of uncertainty, or a facile gloss that makes of indecision a species of fairness.

In the fashion of those liberals of an earlier epoch who assumed that their ideology partook of a scientific objectivity that lesser ideologies could not claim, Gutmann asks us to assume the neutrality and the rationality of her liberal convictions. She contrasts society's "subjective social practices" with a university's "objective social standards," as if those standards were not themselves products of social consensus, political power, and conventional paradigms. She dismisses creationism as unreasonable and unscientific without subjecting the meaning of conventional science to any scrutiny at all. But after Popper, Kuhn, and Feyerabend, liberal totems such as reason, science, and objectivity simply cannot go unexamined, least of all in a book on education.

Gutmann's democratic sentiments are obvious and admirable. But she has not reconciled them with her liberal convictions, or given them the edge to cut through modern pedagogy's massed conservative assailants. Her conciliatory method is measured and fair. But to the egalitarians under heavy siege, this may not appear as a wholly unmitigated virtue. Men and women in the field under fire from the right for treason to high culture, and from the center for failing to teach literacy, are likely to look past her in search of less cautious rescuers, who are willing to dash into the middle of the fray with trumpets sounding on behalf of the nation's children. The assault on democratic education has been powerful, for many Americans persuasive, and its force should not be underestimated. But it still awaits a response.

BENJAMIN R. BARBER

Benjamin R. Barber, author of the forthcoming *The Conquest of Politics* (Princeton University Press), teaches political science at Rutgers University.

Reconsideration: Ignazio Silone

SOCIALISM AND SENSIBILITY

BY IRVING HOWE

TWO encompassing visions held the imagination of Ignazio Silone: the secular promise of socialist liberation and the Christian promise of spiritual transcendence. A writer at once sardonic and kindly, glum and humorous, Silone knew—this knowledge forms the spine of his work—that even if these two visions might somehow be yoked through an act of will, they could not settle into a true harmony, for they pertained to separate realms and must always be in severe tension. It became Silone's choice as a writer and a man to live with that tension, indeed, to leave himself open to it.

Writing about the desolation of Europe during the decades of totalitarian power, Silone focused again and again on political problems that soon revealed themselves also to be moral problems—and not in order to offer any programmatic solutions, but to embody human dilemmas in works of fiction. Who, reading *Bread and Wine* upon its first appearance in 1937, could suppose that there was any solution? For a generation of readers still alive to the call of social idealism, yet grown impatient with party dogmas, Silone's books spoke with a painful immediacy. Not that we knew anything about the Abruzzi, that poverty-stricken area of Italy in which his novels are usually set. We simply felt that the moral and political quandaries of his characters were ours too. In the years of betrayal and demoralization preceding the Second World War, a book like Silone's revolutionary fable *Fontamara* (1930) could bring back memories of hope, and a book like *Bread and Wine*, hope by now all but lost, could yield a gesture of companionship to friends in defeat.

The spiritual condition, as Silone once remarked, to which all his novels keep returning

> resembles a camp of refugees in some no man's land, out in the open, existing by chance. What do you expect refugees to do from morning to night? They spend the best part of their time telling each other stories. The stories are not very entertaining to be sure, but they tell them anyway—mainly, to understand what has happened.

From his first novel, *Fontamara*, still buoyed by Marxist belief, to his play *The Story of a Humble Christian* (1968), depicting the helplessness before the world of a pure-souled Christian who in the 14th century unexpectedly becomes a pope, everything Silone wrote was motivated by rebellion against social injustice and, as he began critically to examine the terms of his rebellion, by a need to define the condition of humanity for those who had chosen to rebel. What, in this century of the total state, could it mean to be a man? How, in a world of terror and deceit, could one retain a portion of one's humanity? At what cost, and with what wrenchings of the self?

Silone had once said, "I would willingly pass my life writing and rewriting the same book—that one book which every writer carries within him, the image of his own soul, and of which his published works are only more or less approximate fragments." He did keep writing and rewriting "the same book," for he was fortunate enough to be possessed by a great subject and firm enough to resist the fluctuations of literary fashion that sometimes made him popular but more often did not. His great subject was the relation of corruptible action to absolute principle, of worldly means to transcendent ends, of historical commitment to personal desire.

At the age of 16 Silone joined the Socialist Youth League of Italy, impelled by outrage over the wretchedness of the peasants. For some 15 years politics would be his lifeblood. He joined the Italian Communist Party soon after it

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was formed in 1921. Later he served as a leader of the anti-fascist underground. In 1927 Silone journeyed to Moscow with the Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti, where both rebelled, a little, against a Moscow proposal that they sign a denunciation of Trotsky without even having read the document they were to declare heretical. Togliatti would remain in the Stalinist camp; Silone would leave it forever. Dark years of ill health and exile followed for Silone, with inner moral and intellectual confusion. The rest of his life, until his death in 1978, he devoted to writing, though after the liberation of Italy he participated briefly in the revived socialist movement of his country.

SILONE'S fictions are wry, sardonic, weary, tinged with disillusion, even with despair, yet no writer of our time has so stubbornly devoted himself to the theme of human renewal or so persistently refused the lure of nihilism. He knew and loved the Italian peasants, but knew and loved them too well for even a faint tinge of sentimentalism to mar his novels. Educated in Italy, a nation sagging under a culture of high rhetoric, he seemed immune to all vanities of language, all notions that "the word" could ever be self-sufficient. He made of small things—a casual gesture by one of his characters, a sly anecdote told with seeming offhandedness—tokens of redemptive possibility. His very pessimism could be bracing.

To read Silone's three major books—*Fontamara*, *Bread and Wine*, and *School for Dictators* (1938), the last a mordant dialogue about the nature of fascism—is to encounter the oldness of things in Europe: all those clever, tormented priests and all those hunted, doubting revolutionists linked to their helplessness. Silone's finest work, *Bread and Wine*, conveys like no other fiction of our time the cowardly surrender of bourgeois Italy to fascism and the sad crumbling of the socialist opposition. A distraught revolutionist, Pietro Spina, puts on the frock of a priest, Paolo Spada, as a disguise for his underground activity (Peter Thorn makes himself into Paul Sword); but then the priest's frock becomes more than a disguise, almost as if he were in quest of a second or renewed being, not to replace his political self but simultaneously to reinforce and oppose it. Silone accepts as a given the conflict between the need for action and the desire for contemplation, the one a striving for worldly power and the second a straining toward individual purity; but he does not posit any facile merger of the socialist and Christian projects. His central theme becomes an effort to hold these two in balance, and the improbability of this effort becomes in his books an occasion for tragedy, yet also an incitement to choice and freedom.

Let us glance at the main action of *Bread and Wine*. The sick and hunted Spina, as he wanders about the countryside, abandons his doctrinal Marxism—it does not correspond to his perceptions of social reality—but he staunchly maintains his rebelliousness. The priest's frock he employs as a disguise becomes emblematic of a hesitant and partial transformation of being. He must still bear the responsibilities of a political man, and indeed, as soon as the opportunity arises, he resumes the tasks of the underground leader. ("He was Pietro Spina again.") Yet, with some embarrassment and even guilt, he assumes the semblance of a mundane saint, a revolutionary Christian unburdened by Christian rites or theology. One of the most touching moments in the book occurs in an early chapter when Don Benedetto, the marvelous priest who had been Spina's teacher, reads from an essay Spina had written as a boy:

> But for the fact that it would be very boring to be exhibited on altars after one's death . . . I should like to be a saint. I don't want to live in accordance with circumstances, conventions, and material expediency, but I want to live and struggle for what seems to me to be just and right without regard to the consequences.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that, in his disguise as Spada, Pietro Spina comes to be regarded as a saint by the people around him, though at no time does he invite such a misapprehension. Still, if his task, in Albert Camus's words, is to discover whether it's "possible to become a saint without believing in God," then it is a human, fallible, even fallen saint that he becomes.

Part of this stems from political realism. Spina decides, soon after arriving in the Abruzzi, that the usual kinds of political agitation are irrelevant under fascism. People have been misled by slogans for too long; they distrust all the phrases of politics. And as for the peasants, they have never trusted anything said by talkers from the cities. Most people understand the truth well enough; it is courage and energy they lack, a readiness to sacri-

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fice themselves. What is needed, Spina concludes, are not political programs but examples of uprightness, a pilgrimage of good deeds. Men must be stirred to heroism; they must be healed. And this leads, pragmatically, to the idea that in a society as debased as fascist Italy, where no one believes the words everyone repeats, the prime need is an instance of one man speaking the truth without regard to convenience or fear.

But for anyone raised in Catholic Italy, there must of course be one ultimate model. Spina comes to believe in the example of Jesus, not in his resurrection but in his agony; Jesus figures for him in entirely human terms. To live as a simple, "primitive" Christian without the church means to shoulder the greatest possible insecurity before man and God. "No word and no gesture can be more persuasive than the life, and, if necessary, the death of a man who strives to be free, loyal, just, sincere, disinterested. A man who shows what a man can be."

Yet this yearning for transformed being does not deflect Spina from immediate political action—though in the judgment of his more conventional comrades it may complicate and hinder it. Silone is too shrewd, too experienced for the allurements of moral posturing, or for that charting from secular ideology to religious faith that has become so frequent and tiresome a theme in recent fiction. When Spina goes to Rome and there meets the scattered cadres of the underground, especially the impressive old militant Romeo, it is on behalf of political ends. When he talks with the handful of young fascists who naively believe their "revolution" has been betrayed by Mussolini, he deals with them as a political man. And at the book's end, as he flees to the mountains, he wears an "ordinary felt hat . . . that could equally well be adapted to ecclesiastic or lay purposes, depending on how it was shaped or worn." He is and he is not Paolo Spada; or put another way, Paolo Spada is his doubling possibility, to be assumed, discarded, or partly adopted.

UPON HIS return to the Abruzzi Spina encounters a disappointment familiar enough to radicals. He comes up against the lethargy of the masses, their deep skepticism about all calls to action, their stubborn belief that somehow misery is an ordained condition. Words alone cannot shake them; and only, thinks Spina, the force of one man's example might move them out of their age-old fatalism (a notion, by the way, that bears a curious resemblance to the belief of some anarchists that only feats of violence can "electrify" the masses). Yet, whatever its tactical efficacy, this view of Spina's is also a sign of his genuine if incomplete self-transformation. A Spina who is also a Spada may help break the cynicism that smothers the consciousness of the masses; a new being may hold in check the revolutionist's temptation to manipulate and dominate those he claims to be liberating (this thought is brought home forcibly through Spina's encounter with the anarchistic Uliva in Rome); but whatever else, a new being is necessary in order to survive in the foul atmosphere of fascism. Spina must edge a little into Spada while still remaining Spina.

And here, I think, we reach the intellectual or thematic strength of *Bread and Wine*: that what I've called Silone's two encompassing visions, socialism and Christianity, are brought into a tense connection, not as abstract or inert intellectual systems confronting each other but as elements of vibrant experience. Spina, and behind him Silone, is obsessed with the problem of how a decent person can act in a terrible time. One answer, not the only or sufficient one, is that he must find a way to live, even if he cannot act, perhaps with the hope that living well may finally come to be a mode of action. Spina and Spada are two, and then they are one, and then again two, like streams of consciousness joining and parting and finally crossing. The inner clash that Silone's hero undergoes is reflected in the contrast between the two women who are near him: Bianchina, flesh of this world, and Christina, spirit of another. The very title carries this duality: bread and wine as tokens of Christian mystery, bread and wine as substances the peasants need for each day's survival.

A similar tension characterizes the book's narrative. Those segments that are set in the countryside have a way of taking on a semi-allegorical cast, with the peasants speaking at times in emblematic terms, as if they were representative voices rather than individual figures. I don't mean to suggest that these segments ever become wholly allegorical or depart fundamentally from the norms of realism; only that here we feel the extent to which Silone's imagination is drawn to the fable or exemplary tale. Once Spina comes to the city, however, the novel settles into a hard and precise kind of realism, a straight rendering of figure and incident.

SILONE was a short-breathed writer. One can no more imagine him undertaking the sort of multilayered, thickly populated social novel favored by European writers earlier in the century than attempting the experimental structures and dictions of literary modernism. Silone lacked the hunger, the zest for sheer representation of experience that had characterized the classical 19th-century novelists, and he showed little concern for niceties or complexities of form. Yet in his own modest (and largely unrecognized) way he was an innovator in the art of fiction, yoking together realistic matter and fablelike modes, and counting heavily on the moral suggestiveness of the anecdote.

The anecdote is the crucial unit in Silone's novels. For him it is the crux of thought and experience, the kernel of inherited wisdom embodied in anonymous voice and skeptical gesture. The anecdote is what remains undefiled in the life of the *cafoni*, the poorest peasants, even after the stupefying rhetoric of bureaucrats and lawyers has become hopelessly corrupt. The anecdote is a last defense of the downtrodden—it is the peasants'

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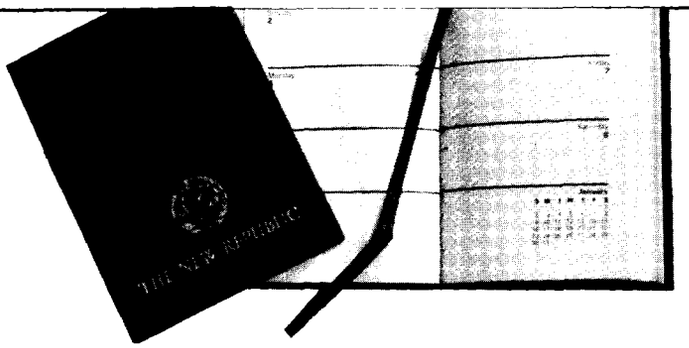
"theorizing." What intellectuals freeze into abstraction, the peasants thaw into miniature narrative. The thought behind the anecdote, while often sly and sometimes deep, is seldom developed; it is quick, intuitive, fixed on particulars, like bread and wine.

Anecdotes in Silone's novels serve a function somewhat like that of dramatic confrontations in conventional novels. The anecdote ties things together, not by "raising" them to generality but by holding them close to the earth. Through his affection for the anecdote, far more than in his sometimes awkward direct statement, Silone declares a stubborn, quizzical, and not at all romantic attachment to the folk.

WHENEVER it appears, the anecdote enriches the texture and speeds the movement of the narrative, warding off that allegorical dryness that is one of Silone's recurrent weaknesses. The pessimistic humor of his main speakers becomes his closest approximation to something like . . . well, not exactly optimism, but a style enabling resistance to pessimism. A peasant hears that many nations would be "prepared to pay to have [our leader Mussolini] in their country," and then, with a neat bit of slyness, asks, "as he disliked generalities . . . exactly how much other nations would be willing to pay to acquire our leader." At another point a group of peasants is enjoying the "lovely fairy story" about wolves and lambs lying down together so that laws will no longer be necessary, and one of them says that as far as he's concerned, he would "replace all existing laws with one single law. . . . It would give every Italian the right to emigrate." The anecdote becomes a shield against pomposity, against pretentious spirituality, against everything that is falsely pious and official. The anecdote speaks for earth and air, bread and wine.

But, it must be asked, does not Silone's method make for a somewhat uneven or bumpy narrative surface? Each segment of the novel, heightened by a supply of anecdotes, tends to become self-sufficient, so that we don't get in *Bread and Wine* that accumulating tension, that overarching span of narrative, that we often find, or expect, in realistic fiction. Silone has his own way. Beneath the slow, broken rhythm of his narrative there emerges another, deeper rhythm, that of a man's recurrent effort to discover what he is and why he is here. The growth of Pietro Spina's consciousness,



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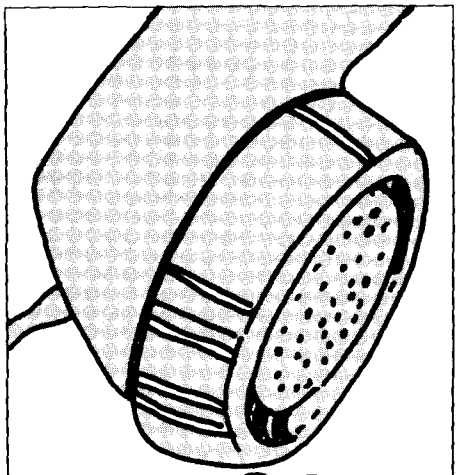

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revealed mainly through a series of illuminating encounters with other characters, forms the baseline of story and idea, action and thought.

BREAD AND WINE is a novel deeply entangled with problems and passions of our time—saturated, so to speak, in history. When the book first came out a half century ago, it moved many readers in an especially intimate way, since they too felt themselves to be entangled with these problems and passions. Those of us to whom the book spoke so forcefully were moved not because we saw it as narrowly political but because we felt Silone was a true witness to the turmoil of our moment. We could not readily separate its thrust of idea from its artistic substance. History seemed too oppressive for such aesthetic luxuries. Nor did Silone invite them. He wrote as a man completely subject to the pressures of his time, utterly indifferent to what posterity (or critics arrogating the voice of posterity) might make of his work.

It was, more or less, in this spirit that we first read *Bread and Wine*, as a work at once true to the claims of fiction and the claims of history. But decades have passed. I find myself wondering, a half century later, how we are to read this novel once the historical moment it portrays has passed into history. And what can such a work mean to younger readers who have lived through other times, other troubles?

I can only speak for myself. Reading the novel again, I find myself noticing its occasional stiffness of comment, its verbal reticence, its curiously uneven rhythm. These are all secondary matters. I find myself still moved by memories of my first encounter with *Bread and Wine*, associated with all the terrible events of those years in the late '30s when it really did seem that Western civilization was near collapse. And I find myself moved in a new way, for now this novel of anguish and aspiration seems not just a story about an anti-fascist desperately searching for a path to effectiveness, but also a meditation—sad, humane, compassionate—on the terms of our life.

Bread and Wine marks out, with a steady truthfulness, the time in which we have lived: perhaps more through Silone's voice than through his words. If, as we like to believe, it is true that literature binds us, across the gap of circumstance, to those who came before us, then *Bread and Wine* will speak to anyone, of whatever age, who tries sincerely to reflect upon man's fate in our century. □

TRB, *from page 6*

about how he would perform as president. Simon, on the other hand, was perceived by the public as a rather clean and wholesome individual, and thus the revelation that those around him don't always wash their hands becomes a key element in assessing his character."

Simon aides also point to what they say is a lack of attention paid to Vice President Bush's recent acknowledgment that he diverted $15 million from the Iran-*contra* arms sale transaction to buy a château on the Loire for his French mistress. They argue that this episode ought to have raised more eyebrows than the one that now has done their candidate in.

"No, no, no," commented an obviously irritated Marvin Kalb, director of the Harvard University Center for the Study of Politics, the Press, Policy Planning, and Pepperoni Pizza. "Don't they understand? Bush's embezzlement was an isolated episode, totally different from anything he has ever done before. Therefore, it's insignificant. Simon's hand-washing problems, on the other hand, highlighted concerns that close followers of politics already had expressed among themselves about a gravy-spotted shirt at a press conference last month and a poorly knotted bow tie during a candidate muffin bake-off and welfare symposium in New Hampshire last spring. Thus this episode confirms a *pattern* of behavior that raises legitimate questions about the candidate's character. I'm sorry, but those are the rules."

Another observer, who asked not to be identified, observed: "It couldn't just be that the press is unfairly picking on the Democrats, could it?" He added: "No, of course not. What on earth could I have been thinking of? Everybody knows the press has a liberal bias."

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

enced the June election campaign firsthand. "Eloquent" is not the word I would use to describe British politicians. Why must Britain be the measuring stick with which American culture is judged? Our unbridled Anglophilia is disturbing and unwarranted. 1776 was two centuries ago and yet we always run home to mother for approval. Grow up!

ERNIE JANENSCH
Champaign, Illinois

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Actually

I GOT INTO pop music late: about 1983 to be exact. But now that I've mastered the artful charms of nodding sagely whenever anybody mentions the Bronsky Beat, I'm thinking of getting out again. "What Bono revealed beneath his well-defined and carefully controlled surface was an enthusiast in the grips of reason; a wishful idealist stimulated and confused by his own contradictions; and a young man who quite honestly has not found what he's looking for—and may never," writes David Breskin in the latest issue of *Rolling Stone*.

BONO, IN CASE YOU didn't know, is the lead singer in the U2 pop band, the latest heartthrob of the under-16s and ersatz Gandhi to all those happily married 35-year-olds who still miss John Lennon. He also leads his fans in anti-war chants, supports Amnesty International, and has a friend called Edge. In other words, it's serious, Camus-serious: "Who is it—Camus?—who said, 'Wealth, my dear friend, is not exactly acquittal, just reprieve . . . ,'" is how Bono described the spiritual agonies of being a multimillionaire. But moral compromise, it seems, is the burden every artist has to bear: "It would be a trap for me to spend my whole life fighting a battle about something—my knuckles would be bleeding from beating on the walls of the music business." Not that he's self-righteous, you understand. Dipping momentarily beneath his well-defined and carefully controlled surfaces, Bono is cheerfully frank about commercial exploitation: "Without being precious about U2, let me say I'm learning to accept T-shirts; what I'm not willing to accept is bad T-shirts." An enthusiast, as they say, in the grips of reason.

STILL, EVEN *Rolling Stone*'s hype for a pop version of the inner thoughts of Gary Hart is better than Allan Bloom's critique. In the most-read part of that largely skip-read book (come on, own up, who made it through the chapter called "From Socrates' Apology to Heidegger's *Rektoratsrede*"?), Bloom describes pop as a "non-stop, commercially pre-packaged masturbational fantasy." He goes on: "Nothing noble, sublime, profound, delicate, tasteful, or even decent can find a place in such tableaux." Forget the hyperbole for a moment: what's interesting is not so much that he misses the essential banality of U2-like schmaltz, but that his argument reeks of a pseudo-intellectualism normally found only on the semi-serious left. Bono, like any precocious 17-year-old, reaches instinctively for Camus to beef up the cant. Bloom, on the other hand, ascribes pop music to, well, Nietzsche. (Also sprach Bananarama.) Pop music is out to "tap again the irrational sources of vitality, to replenish our dried-up stream from barbaric sources, and thus [encourage] the Dionysian and the music derivative from it." Well, I guess that just about leaves Brahms.

OF COURSE, all this is ridiculous. Pop music is designed to make people superficially happy, take their mind off things, get them to spend more money, and, if they're really desperate, to dance. At times, it's even vaguely uplifting. The only people who could possibly object to all this cheerfully shallow, harmless activity are the emotionally challenged or incorrigibly fanatic. After all, nobody *has* to subscribe to *Rolling Stone*. But what makes Bloom's argument particularly disingenuous is that it's all based on a deceit anyway. The real message of the book, after all, is pro-Nietzsche. Bloom's central argument is that, as the first modern philosopher to return to Socrates, Nietzsche is not only the supreme contemporary thinker: he could even be right. Bloom keeps this quiet, of course (it's hidden in those chapters on Heidegger's *Rektoratsrede*), but the real message is clear. Call it the Straussian reading of Bloom: you tell your graduate students that Nietzsche's right, your undergraduates that he's wrong, and the American public that he's responsible for David Bowie.

BUT THE REAL IRONY is that this pop attack is regarded as "conservative." In fact, real conservatives are deeply attached to anything genuinely popular, as a bulwark against the conceits of elites. The most unappealing aspect of Bloom, and one that occasionally obscures the wisdom of his broader argument, is the scarcely concealed contempt he shows for ordinary people. He really should take another look. The Pet Shop Boys have a new album out called *Actually*. It's camp, witty, and unself-consciously shallow, like all good pop. It's also great to dance to, and bears only a marginal debt to late 19th-century nihilism. The lead track, "Rent," has the immortal '80s sentiment: "Look at my hopes, my dreams, the currency we spent. I love you. You pay my rent." Now, Herr Professor, you can't get a healthier *petit-bourgeoisie* than that.

IN A LIVELY NEW biography of the late theater critic Ken Tynan, by his wife, Kathleen, there's a particularly vivid chapter on Oxford. It puts into perspective the mass banality of the alleged "gay scene" at Yale, described in a notorious recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*. Gay Oxford—in the old sense of the adjective—was something Tynan created, almost alone, by the sheer exuberance of his wit. It didn't require an ideology, nor did it get much help from the zeitgeist. Tynan's England, unlike Yale's Reaganite America, was one of grim, postwar austerity. Into this, Tynan brought his purple doeskin coat and gold satin shirts: "Sometimes, Ken wore makeup, or so the story went: his girlfriends would say, 'Don't wear makeup, Ken,' and he would answer, 'Just a little crimson lake on the mouth.'" His dancing was described as "a one-man writhe and wriggle to the rhythm, stretching out his arms." (Spot the neo-Nietzschean.) His debating techniques were: "1) The wild, appealing, distracted stare at the gallery. 2) The clutching of the text of the speech (fully written out on mauve . . .) to the heart with sinuously twisted fingers. 3) The body curved backward like a bow . . . convulsively jerked into a vertical position for the ejection of a word." And his politics at Oxford revealed an uncanny knack for getting it right: "A century ago I should have been a feudal Tory; a century hence, an Anarchist. At the present I am a Liberal, with Confucian leanings." Reason, you might say, in the grips of an enthusiast.

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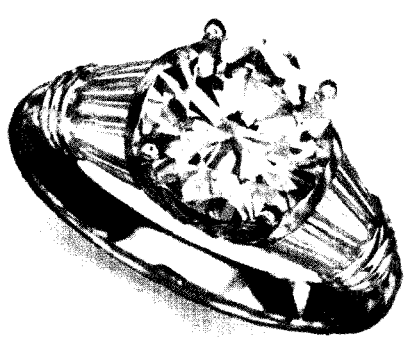

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